

# **ROLE OF EDUCATION IN SOCIAL INCLUSION OF MUSLIMS OF NEPAL**

**THESIS**

Submitted to the University of Kashmir for the Award of  
the Degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D)**

**In**

**SOCIOLOGY**

**By**

**Pasang Sherpa**

**Under the Supervision of  
Prof. Gulshan Majeed**



**INSTITUTE OF KASHMIR STUDIES  
University of Kashmir  
Srinagar-190006**



# INSTITUTE OF KASHMIR STUDIES

University of Kashmir

Hazratbal, Srinagar-190006

NAAC Accredited Grade 'A'

## Declaration

I solemnly declare that the thesis entitled **Role of Education in Social Inclusion of Muslims of Nepal** submitted by me in the discipline of **Sociology** embodies my own contribution. It is a genuine piece of research work and has been completed while taking into account all the necessary requirements laid down for the purpose. This work, which does not contain any piracy, has been submitted, so far, for the award of any degree in this university or anywhere else.

Pasang Sherpa  
Institute of Kashmir Studies  
University of Kashmir  
November, 2012



**INSTITUTE OF KASHMIR STUDIES**  
**University of Kashmir**  
**Hazratbal, Srinagar-190006**  
NAAC Accredited Grade 'A'

## **Certificate**

Certified that the present research work entitled **Role of Education in Social Inclusion of Muslims of Nepal** submitted by Pasang Sherpa through the Institute of Kashmir Studies for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in **Sociology** is a bonafide research work and has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of any other degree to the best of my knowledge.

We recommend that the thesis be placed before the examiner for evaluation for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in the discipline of **Sociology**.

**Prof. Gulshan Majeed**  
Supervisor

**Prof. Siddiq Wahid**  
Director

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the social exclusion situation among the Muslim communities and the role of education in their social inclusion in Nepal. In Nepal, the concept of social exclusion and inclusion has gained prominence in public and development policy discourse following its inclusion as one of four pillars of the Tenth Plan (2002-2007). In recent years, the inclusion has become a policy agenda and the most populist political agenda for development and social change among various groups in the country.

Muslims are one of the highly disadvantaged, marginalized and excluded minority groups with distinct religious and cultural identities in Nepal. They have been excluded from social, economic, educational and political institutions; which, is reflected in their low literacy and high poverty rates and low representation in the civil service, police, military and other decision-making levels of the state. Historically, they have been ignored by the state and excluded from mainstream development processes due to their origin, religious minority status and territorial/regional identity.

Though, Muslims in general have themselves to blame for their low literacy rate and the consequent exclusion from mainstream yet, it is a fact that the state has substantially remained oblivious to the demands and requirements of the Muslim communities.

Nepal's social structure (i.e. Caste system), social discrimination, social inequality, the government's melting pot policy and non-recognition of Madrasa education has become the most crucial impediments against inclusion. More importantly, the nature of centralized state governance structures and other discriminatory practices in the country have contributed to the exclusion of these communities in the past. During the Rana regime (1848-1951), only family members and loyal supporters were entitled to socio-economic opportunities; their power was further strengthened by social exclusion in Nepal. During this feudal regime, any dissent, in the form of alternative 'institutions' or ideologies, was brutally suppressed, and the privileges of the dominant group were further reinforced by the state.

After major political changes in 1951 there has been a centralization of power largely within three caste/ethnic groups (hill Brahmins, Chhetris and Newars) who constitute

only 35 percent of the population in Nepal. The minority Muslims have largely been excluded from decision and policy making levels in the government. Therefore, they have been deprived of the opportunity to articulate their needs and priorities through forming government policy in their favor. Thus, due to their exclusion from decision-making and policy making frameworks, they have remained poor, illiterate and exploited in Nepal. The adverse effects of unequal opportunities and political power, on development, are even more damaging because the educational, economic, social and political disadvantages are reinforced repeatedly over generations.

Muslims have lower values in all the indicators of the Human Development Index (HDI). The lower HDI for Muslims derives largely from their very low educational attainment compared to other components of the HDI. Their low human development or capability hinders their representation and participation, which, in turn, perpetuates their low level of human development.

In the Muslim communities, women have higher illiteracy rate and lesser access to higher education. Discriminatory attitudes are evident when we consider the rate of attendance of boys and girls in the various schools. The majority of Muslim children attends Madrasas rather than the government schools. In schools, the girl's dropout rate is higher than the boys. The main reasons of low literacy, high dropout and low attainment of higher education among Muslims and particularly among girls is the prevalence of poverty, religious orthodoxy, early marriage, lack of awareness, conservative feelings and a general abhorrence towards mainstream education, lack of accommodative syllabus and textual material on cultural aspects of the Muslims in schools, lack of Muslim-friendly environment, lack of mother tongue education, lack of incentives and scholarships in schools and lack of employment opportunities for Muslims in the country.

In Nepal, Muslim children facing the cumulative impact of poverty, social discrimination and social exclusion are severely restricted from enjoying their basic rights including education. Poverty has pulled out many Muslim students from school to work and/or compelled them never to enroll. Social exclusion has pushed them out of their classrooms because of the culturally built-in caste or other types of taboos.

In this context, the education system is unable to address the multiple challenges that children bring to school. Many Muslim parents and children are not finding the current education, curriculum, school environment relevant for them as per their needs. There is no inclusive education system, no feeding provisions for hungry children, no social exclusionary issue discussion forums in the school, no pedagogical practice to promote the morals of the socially excluded children and no Muslim culture-friendly environment in the school.

There is no provision in the local government to support the runaway and marginalized children. In this situation, children themselves are responsible for their own and their family's survival. Poor quality and rigid education in this situation has no meaning. If by chance these children enter education, they either end up in resource-poor schools or Madrasas which still have not been fully recognized as an educational institution in Nepal.

In the modern world, education is the basic source of knowledge and one of the main agents/vehicles for social change and social inclusion in society. Educational attainment influences other indicators of human development and opportunities in many ways. It has been perceived as a force of enhancing the capability of the people in terms of enhancing appropriate life skills, knowledge and experiential wisdom to acquire economic and social prosperity. Realizing that fact, the Government of Nepal has made a commitment to Education for All and Millennium Development Goals.

Social inclusion of Muslims and other minority groups is the major issue in the present context of Nepal. However, the issues and problems of Muslims are still relatively unheard and remain unresolved. In the given context, this study helps to understand the socio-economic, political and educational situation of Muslims from the perspective of social exclusion and inclusion. The study provides insight into the mindset of minorities and the majority who have to deal with them directly or indirectly. The study will also provide an opportunity for the minorities to reach out to the public creating an atmosphere of goodwill and better understanding. Similarly, the study also helps policy makers to formulate inclusive policies regarding education, government employment and politics, which ultimately help to bring Muslims into the nation building and mainstream development process of the country.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the supervision, guidance, cooperation and help of several individuals, institutions, organizations and agencies, who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance to the preparation and completion of this study.

First and foremost, I am extremely thankful to my supervisor Prof. Gulshan Majeed, Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Kashmir for his masterly supervision, constructive comments, remarks and above all, inspiration and continuous support in many ways. His overall guidance, especially during the conceptual and analytical phases, were instrumental in shaping this study.

I express my sincere gratitude to my co-supervisor Prof. Ganesh Man Gurung, Chair, University Grants Commission Nepal and former head of the Central Department of Sociology Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur for his guidance, constant support and constructive suggestions throughout this research. I am equally thankful to Prof. G.M. Khawaja, Professor (Research), Institute of Kashmir Studies for his generous support and help.

I would also like to thank Prof. Siddiq Wahid, Director, Institute of Kashmir Studies for his encouragement and all kinds of support. Prof. Riyaz Punjabi, former Director, Institute of Kashmir Studies and Vice Chancellor of University of Kashmir deserves special thanks for his great support, cooperation and overall guidance.

I am thankful to Dr. Rita Thapa, former Chairperson of South Asia Foundation (SAF) Nepal Chapter and Dr. Nischal Pandey, present Chairperson of SAF Nepal for nominating me for Madanjeet Singh SAF Scholarship from Nepal.

Numerous libraries and their staff have very kindly provided assistance with this research particularly the Central Library of Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Social Science Baha Library, Kathmandu, CERID Library, Kathmandu, Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, Delhi, Allama Iqbal Library, University of Kashmir and Library of Institute of Kashmir Studies, Srinagar. Without mentioning individual names of the staff of these libraries, I express my gratitude to all of them.

I would like to pay my sincere thanks to Dr. Mingma Sherpa, Dr. Swoyam Prakash Rana, Dr. Mrigendra Karki, Dr. Humaira Showkat, Mr. Nima Tendup Sherpa, Ms. Sara Subba, Mr. Gazi Mohammed Masood, Mr. Pemba Thile Sherpa and many others for their valuable support, cooperation and encouragement. I am also thankful to Dr. Eric Saczuk, Department of Geomatics Engineering, School of Construction and the

Environment, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Canada and Purna Raol for their support with language editing.

I highly acknowledge all of the respondents of the study districts, without whose cooperation my whole endeavor would have been meaningless. I will never forget their warm hospitality and due concern for my work.

I extend my sincere thanks to all the staff and research fellows of the Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Kashmir for their utmost cooperation and administrative support during my stay in the institute. I must also mention the contribution of my friends Mr. Raja Nazakat Ali and Ms. Nadia Mehar Din from Pakistan, Mr. Prasad Dharmasena and Ms. Sanjeevi Manthirathna of Sri Lanka and all other friends of the Institute of Kashmir Studies for their spontaneous generosity and empathy.

I am grateful to the Department of Sociology Anthropology, Trichandra Multiple Campus for providing me study leave to pursue my research. I am extremely thankful to Mr. Madanjeet Singh, Goodwill Ambassador, UNESCO and founder, SAF and Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, Chairperson, SAF Chapter of India for providing financial support for conducting this research.

Above all, I am proud of my parents who sent me to school at a time when giving education to one's wards was the least priority. I owe a lot to my late mother for her constant and consistent support. I understand their suffering and hardships. My wife Pasang Dolma Sherpa deserves my special thanks for her kind cooperation and support throughout the entire period of my study. Without her encouragement and understanding, it would have been impossible for me to complete this work.

Finally, I express my sincere and grateful thanks to all authors and writers from whose writings I have benefitted. I fully acknowledge that any errors, mistakes and or shortcomings in this dissertation are mine.

**Pasang Sherpa**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Declaration	i
Certificate	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	vi
Contents	viii
List of Tables	xiii
List of Figures	xv
Abbreviations	xvi
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	<b>1-40</b>
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Importance of Education in Human Life in Relation to Social Inclusion and Exclusion	7
1.3 History of Development of Education in Nepal	9
1.4 Social Exclusion and Educational Situation of Muslims in Nepal	13
1.5 Statement of the Problem	17
1.6 Objectives of the Study	20
1.7 Significance of the Study	20
1.8 Conceptual Framework of the Study	23
1.9 Research Methodology	25
1.9.1 The Study Area and Methods of Samples Selection	25
1.9.2 Research Methods and Sources of Data	28
1.9.3 Data Collection Methods, Tools and Techniques	29
1.9.3.1 Household Survey	29
1.9.3.2 Key Informant Interviews	29
1.9.3.3 Focus Group Discussions	30
1.9.3.4 Observations	31
1.9.3.5 Case Studies	31
1.9.3.6 Document Study	32
1.9.4 Pilot Test and Validation of Research Tools	33
1.9.5 Data Analysis	33
1.9.6 Data Triangulation	34
1.9.7 Ethical Considerations	34

1.9.8 Challenges and Limitations of the Study	36
1.10 Organization of the Study	37
Conclusion	38
<b>Chapter 2 Review of the Literature</b>	<b>41-115</b>
2.1 Theoretical Review	41
2.1.1 Concept and Definition of Social Exclusion	41
2.1.2 Social Exclusion and Capability Deprivation	43
2.1.3 Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity	43
2.1.4 Social Exclusion, Poverty and Inequality	45
2.1.5 Social Exclusion, Culture and Democracy	45
2.1.6 Social Exclusion and Pro/Anti Culturalism	49
2.2. Education from Sociological Perspective	53
2.2.1 Structural Functionalism	53
2.2.2 Education and Social Reproduction	54
2.2.3 Structure and Agency: Bourdieu and Cultural Capital	55
2.3 Sociological Theory of Religion	58
2.4 Majority-Minority Relation Theory	59
2.4.1 Types of Minority Groups	60
2.4.2 Social Discrimination and Minority Groups	61
2.5 Theoretical Perspectives of the Study	62
2.6 An overview of Majority Policies to Overcome Minority	65
2.7 Social Inclusion	69
2.7.1 Exclusion and Inequality Discourse in Nepal	71
2.7.2 Social Inclusion and Exclusion Debate at Policy Level in Nepal	72
2.7.3 Dimensions of Social Exclusion in Nepal	74
2.7.4 Government Policy and Plans for Social Inclusion	77
2.7.4.1 Three- Year Interim Plan: Social Capital Formation	77
2.7.4.2 Rights Based Approach for Social Transformation	78
2.7.4.3 Social Inclusion in the Three-Year Interim Plan	
2.7.4.4 Inclusion of Muslims in Three-Year Interim Plan	78
2.8 Muslims and Islamic Education	80
2.8.1 Aim of Islamic Education	80
2.9 International Laws, Rights and Instruments in Relation to Education	81
2.9.1 Multicultural Education Policies	82

2.10 Constitutional Provisions for Minority Rights	87
2.11 Minority Mobilization Policies in Nepal	89
2.12 Educational Policies and Plans in Nepal	91
2.13 Review of Previous Studies on Muslims and their Educational Situation in Nepal	93 99
2.13.1 Books Review	99
2.13.2 Research Reports	105
Conclusion	112
<b>Chapter 3 Muslims of Nepal: A Socio-Historical Perspective</b>	<b>116-146</b>
3.1 General Introduction of Nepal	116
3.2 Migration History of Muslims in Nepal	122
3.3 Muslim Identity in Nepal	124
3.4 Socio- economic and Cultural Perspective	129
3.4.1 Muslim Population	129
3.4.2 Muslims in Human Development Index	131
3.5 Muslim Society and Culture	135
3.5.1 Language	135
3.5.2 Occupation	135
3.5.3 Social Ranking among Muslims	135
3.6 Education	136
3.7 Per Capita Income	138
3.8 Representation in Civil Service	139
3.9 Political Representation	141
Conclusion	145
<b>Chapter 4 Data Analysis, Presentation And Discussions</b>	<b>147-237</b>
4.1 Introduction of the Study Area: Banke District	147
4.2 Socio-economic and Educational Condition of Muslims in Nepal	149
4.2.1 Population Composition of Respondents	150
4.2.2 Religion and Mother Tongue	151
4.2.3 Economic Condition	152
4.2.3.1 Land Holding	153
4.2.3.2 Ownership of House	155
4.2.3.3 Occupation	156
4.2.3.4 Crops Production and Food Sufficiency	158
4.2.3.5 Source of Income	159
4.2.3.6 Expenditure	160
4.2.4 Health and Drinking Water Facility	161
4.2.5 Education	162

4.2.6 Population Composition	164
4.2.6.1 Marital Status	164
4.2.7 Educational Status of Family Members	165
4.2.8 Education Situation among the School Going Age Children	167
4.2.9 Flow of Muslim Children in Different Schooling System	168
4.2.10 Reasons for Not Going to School and their Engagement Areas	169
4.2.11 Muslims Perception towards Education	171
4.3 Social and Political Participation	173
4.3.1 Citizenship	173
4.3.2 Participation in NGOs and other Community Organizations	173
4.3.3 Political Participation and Representation	176
4.3.4 Gender Role in Household Decision-Making	178
4.3.5 Summing up	181
4.4 Madrasa Education in Nepal	182
4.4.1 Muslim Educational Institutions	184
4.4.2 Status of Madrasa Registration	185
4.4.3 Teaching Mainstream Subjects in Madrasa with Government Recognition	186
4.4.4 Students in Madrasa and Government Schools	187
4.4.5 Qualification of Teachers	189
4.4.6 Infrastructure Facilities	190
4.4.7 Financial Condition and Facility for Teacher	190
4.4.8 Madrasa Management System	191
4.4.9 Curriculum in Madrasas and Mainstream Schools	192
4.4.10 Teaching Methods and Evaluation System	193
4.5 Causes of Lower Participation of Muslims in Mainstream Education	193
4.5.1 Poverty	194
4.5.2 Lack of Accomodative Syllabus and Textual Materials on Cultural Aspects of Muslims in schools	194
4.5.3 School Curriculum and Medium of Instruction	196
4.5.4 School Environment	197
4.5.5 Sense of Discrimination and Humiliation	199
4.5.6 Presence of Agencies Advocating Madrasa Education	202
4.5.7 Other Factors	202
4.6 Socio-economic Profile of Indian Muslims	204
4.6.1 Introduction of the Study Area: Bahraich District	204
4.6.2 Socio-demographic Composition of Muslims in India	206

4.6.2.1 Age and Sex Composition of the Family Members	207
4.6.2.2 Marital Status	208
4.6.3 Economic Condition	209
4.6.3.1 Land Holding	209
4.6.3.2 Ownership of House	210
4.6.3.3 Agricultural Production and Food Sufficiency	211
4.6.3.4 Occupation	212
4.6.3.5 Sources of Income	212
4.6.3.6 Expenditure	214
4.6.4 Drinking Water Facilities and Health Service	215
4.6.5 Educational Facilities	216
4.6.6 Education Condition	216
4.6.7 Flow of Muslim Children to Different Schooling System	217
4.6.8 Reasons for not going to School and their Engagement Areas	218
4.7 Socio-economic Conditions of Nepalese and Indian Muslims: A Comparative Analysis	219
4.7.1 Socio-demographic Composition	219
4.7.2 Educational Conditions of Muslims	221
4.7.3 Flow of Muslim Children in different Schooling Systems	225
4.7.4 Economic Condition	227
4.7.5 Occupation	228
4.7.6 Agricultural Production and Food Sufficiency	230
4.7.7 Interrelationship between Social, Economic and Educational Status Attainment	230
4.7.8 Educational Attainment and its Relation to Employment and other Sectors	231
Conclusion	233
<b>Chapter 5 Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations</b>	<b>238-255</b>
5.1 Conclusion	238
5.2 Implications	248
5.2.1 Policy implication	250
5.2.2 Implication for Future Research	251
5.2.3 Implication for the Muslim Community	252
5.3 Recommendations	252
<b>References</b>	<b>256-267</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>268-270</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>271-272</b>
<b>Publications related to Research work</b>	<b>275</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page No.
1.1	Distributions of Respondents by Age, Sex, Mother Tongue, Religion and Marital Status	27
2.1	Dimensions and Basis of Exclusion in Nepal	74
2.2	Problems and Agenda for Social Inclusion in Nepal	76
2.3	The Millennium Development Goals	83
3.1	Condition of Muslims in Nepal	132
3.2	Differentials in Educational Attainment by Gender, Caste/ethnicity	136
3.3	Political Representation by Caste/ethnicity	143
4.1	Social and Demographic Composition of the Respondents	150
4.2	Average Land and House Holding Situation of Muslims	155
4.3	Distribution of Respondents by Occupation	157
4.4	Average Monthly Income from Different Income Sources	159
4.5	Literacy Rate and Level of Education of Respondents by Sex	163
4.6	Population Composition of Family Members by Age and Sex	164
4.7	Marital Status of Family Members by Sex	165
4.8	Education Status of Family Members by Sex	165
4.9	Different Educational Institutions Going Children by Age and Sex	168
4.10	Reasons for Not Going to School and their Engagement Areas	170
4.11	Muslims Representation in Government and Private Jobs	171
4.12	Muslim Participation in NGOs and School Management Committees	174
4.13	Political Participation and Association	177
4.14	Gender Role in Household Decision-Making	179
4.15	Number of Registered Madrasas by Year and Grade	185
4.16	Number of Students in Government Schools and Madrasas	188
4.17	Educational Qualifications of Teachers in Madrasa and Government School	189
4.18	Social and Demographic Composition of Respondents	207
4.19	Population Composition of Family Members by Age and Sex	208

4.20	Marital Status of Family Members by Sex	208
4.21	Average Land Holding and House Types	210
4.22	Distribution of Population by Occupation	212
4.23	Average Monthly Income from Different Sources of Income	213
4.24	Average Monthly and Annual Household Expenditure	214
4.25	Educational Condition of Muslims by Sex	217
4.26	Different Educational Institutions going Children by Age and Sex	218
4.27	Literacy Rate and Level of Education by Sex	224
4.28	Different Educational Institutions Going Children by Age and Sex	225
4.29	Average Land and House Holding among Muslims of Nepal and India	228
4.30	Distribution of Respondents by Occupation	229
4.31	Food Production Sufficiency	230

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Fig. No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
3.1	Religious Groups in Nepal	119
3.2	Incidence of Poverty by Caste/ethnic Groups	133
3.3	Literacy Rate among Major Caste/ethnic Groups in Nepal	137
3.4	Average Per Capita Income by Caste/ethnic Groups in Nepal	139
3.5	Share of Muslims in third Class Gazette Officer	140
3.6	Muslims Representation in National Legislature	144
4.1	Land Holding Situation of Muslims	154
4.2	Food Production Sufficiency	159
4.3	An Annual Household Expenditure of Muslims	160
4.4	Muslims Representation in Different types of Occupation	171
4.5	Food Production Sufficiency	211
4.6	Average Contributions to Family Income from Different Sources	213



## **ABBREVIATIONS**

A.D	Anno Domini
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ARNEC	All Round National Education Committee
ASHA	Aids and Sexual Health Awareness
BPEP	Basic Primary Education Project
CA	Constituent Assembly
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CERID	Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CNAS	Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Accord
CPM	Cultural Pluralism Model
CPN-M	Communist Party of Nepal - Maoists
CPN-UML	Communist Party of Nepal – United Marxist Leninist
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DOE	Department of Education
DFID	Department for International Development
EFA	Education for All

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPTP	First-pass-the-post
FRP	Formative Research Project
GAR	Graduate Attainment Rate
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GOI	Government of India
GON	Government of Nepal
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV	Human immunodeficiency Virus
HLNEC	High Level National Education Commission
IKS	UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Institute of Kashmir Studies
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ISRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
Kg	Kilogram
LSGA	Local Self Governance Act
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDM	Mid- day-Meal
MLE	Multi Lingual Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MPM	Melting Pot Model
MUD	Moral Underclass Discourse
NCAER	National Council for Applied Economic Research

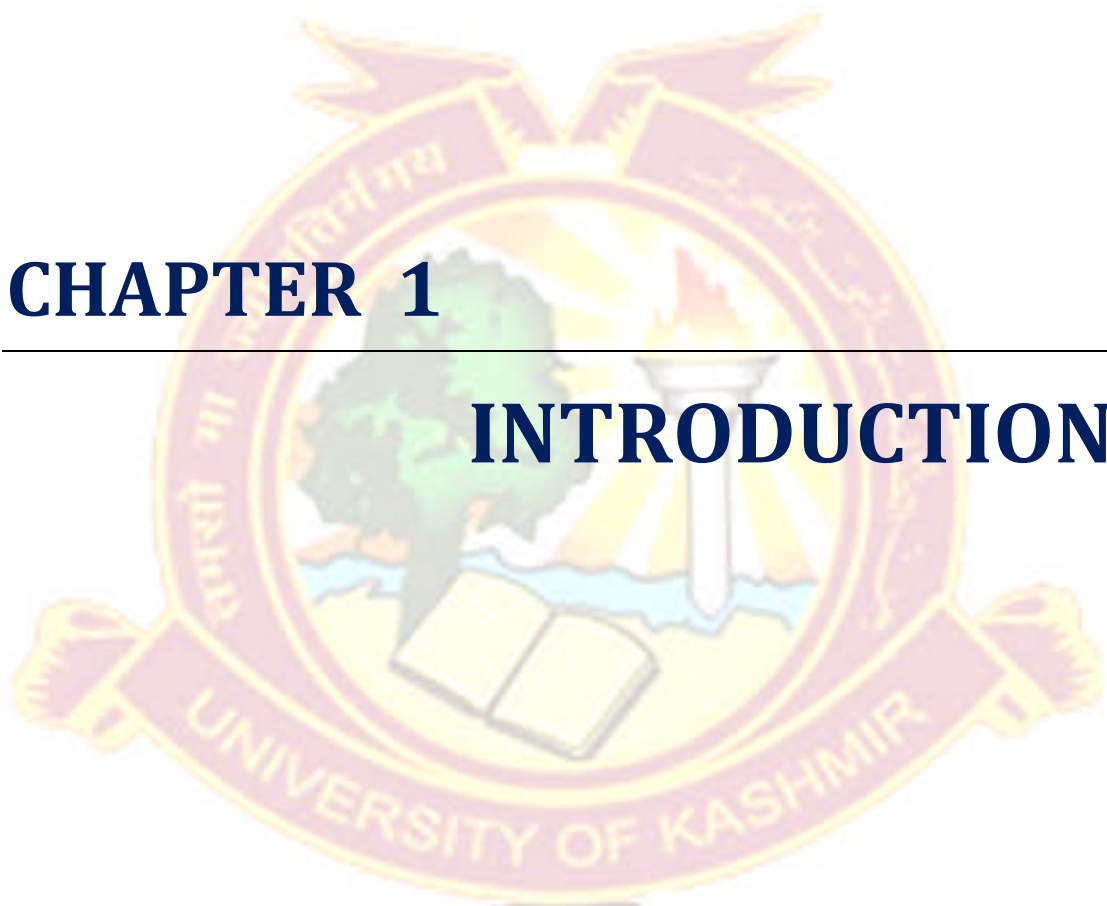
NEC	National Education Commission
NER	Net Enrollment Ratio
NESAC	Nepal South Asia Centre
NESP	National Education System Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NHDR	Nepal Human Development Report
NMIS	Nepal Multiple Indicator Surveillance
NNEPC	Nepal National Education Planning Commission
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRs	Nepali Rupees
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PR	Proportional Representative
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RED	Redistribution Discourse
Rs	Rupees
SAARC	South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation
SAF	South Asia Foundation
SCs	Scheduled Castes
SID	Social integrationist discourse
SIRF	Social Inclusion Research Fund
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences Research
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
STs	Scheduled Tribes

TYIP	Three Years Interim Plan
UGC	University Grants Commission
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UP	Uttar Pradesh
US	United States
VDC	Village Development Committee

# **CHAPTER 1**

---

# **INTRODUCTION**



This chapter explains the background of the study, the importance of education in human life, history of the development of education, the social exclusion and the situation of Muslims in Nepal and a statement of the problem, objectives, significance and research methods of the study. The statement of the problem is specified in terms of a set of research questions. The chapter ends by listing of limitations, ethical considerations and organization of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

This study examines the situation of Muslims in Nepal from the perspective of social exclusion and inclusion. Poverty, inequality and exclusion are universal phenomena and represent serious social problems. The phenomenon of social exclusion is characterized by discrimination, injustice, inequality, and denial of basic human rights. The consequences of social exclusion experienced by deprived and marginalized people around the world are the continuation of the practices perpetuated since ages past. Social exclusion occurs irrespective of whether a society is considered developed or developing. Hence, there emerges an obstacle for any country to construct a cohesive human society. The social, economic, political, religious and educational opportunities and rights of the marginalized and underprivileged groups remain questionable within the country of their origin.

In Nepal, social exclusion has been adversely widespread due to certain heterogeneous factors such as caste, ethnicity, religion, gender and culture. The issue of social exclusion and inclusion has drawn significant attention from researchers, donor agencies and policy makers in recent years in Nepal. The twin terms exclusion and inclusion used in social research and policy discourse are often contested and the terminologies are used in a variety of ways for different contexts (Levitas, 1998 & Silver, 1994).

The concept of social exclusion and inclusion figured prominently in the policy discourse in France in the mid-1970s to describe people with disabilities, and marginal people deprived of employment based social security provisions. The concept was later adopted by the European Union in the late 1980s as a key concept in social policy and in many instances replaced the concept of poverty. In a short period, this concept has gained worldwide popularity and has become one of the important themes in contemporary social policy debates in different countries.

While there is a considerable debate about the precise meaning of the term (Evans & Prellis, 1995; Atkinson, 1998; Klasen, 1998), some of the most useful definitions have sought to emphasize that social exclusion is concerned with the inability to participate effectively in economic, social, and cultural life and, in some characteristics, alienation and distance from mainstream society (Duffy, 1995). In contrast to poverty and unemployment, which focus on individuals or households, social exclusion is primarily concerned with the relationship between the individual and society, and the dynamics of that relationship.

Social exclusion is a concept used in many parts of the world to refer to the complex processes that deny certain groups access to rights, opportunities and resources that are key to social integration. Social exclusion has been defined as a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status and migrant status or where they live. Discrimination occurs in public institutions, such as the legal system or education and health services, as well as social institutions like the household (DFID, 2005).

German social scientist Max Weber referred to exclusion as a form of social closure where one group attempted to secure for itself a privileged position at the expense of some other group through a process of subordination (Burchard, 2002). Therefore, Weber emphasizes the agency, or political aspect of exclusion, describing exclusion as a conscious act of one group to secure its privileged position.

Sociologically, this term is defined as the outcome of multiple deprivations that prevent individuals or groups from participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of the society in which they live ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_exclusion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_exclusion)).

Social exclusion is a multidimensional concept. O'Brien and Penna (2007) suggest the political, social, economic and social network dimensions of exclusion. The political dimension refers to the integration into the democratic and legal system and encompasses formal rights to participation. Key issues are citizenship versus patronage and access to justice. The social dimension refers to social sectors, most notably health and education, as well as to social safety nets. Likewise, the economic dimension concerns rights and access to land and work and social network brings attention to mutual attachment to family, traditional organizations, and the local community.

We can see social exclusion at the different levels such as an individual, a group, a community and a nation. There are many causes responsible for social exclusion and inclusion within a given society or country. The social exclusion literature emphasizes institutional causes of exclusion, which argues that mainstream institutions constrain opportunities for some individuals and groups. Some authors argue that some institutions are divisive and exclusive by their very nature. In this view, exclusion is the outcome of the system, while the socially excluded are left without opportunities to remedy the situation (Burchardt et al., 2002).

Theoretically, social inclusion is a positive concept in the context of change and development of a society, community and the nation as a whole. The basic principle of social inclusion is to accept the other's existence and identity. Acceptance of every one's identity with their own origin, ethnicity, gender, religion, race and economic status and value it as an asset. Without inclusion of all sectors of citizens into the mainstream process of the state building, development initiatives and social intervention, there is always a risk of social tension and conflict.

In Nepal, the concept of social exclusion was not officially recognized until the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), though various forms of exclusion persisted throughout Nepal's history. Social inclusion and exclusion gained prominence in public and development policy discourse after it was included as one of four pillars of the Tenth Plan (2002-2007). In recent years, the inclusion has become a policy agenda and the most populist political agenda for development and social change among various



groups in the country. Similarly, it has also become a single most important theme of discourse among scholars and an important research topic in the social sciences as well.

The terms social inclusion and exclusion are often contested, multidimensional terminologies and fluid in nature, as the term is associated with multiple meanings in different contexts and situations. In the context of Nepal, not only the state machineries but also the geography, history, language, religion and culture have become equally responsible in shaping the process of inclusion and exclusion over the years. Debates on inclusion and exclusion have flourished and understanding of this contending concept is unfolding in various ways.

The social exclusion of a group of people could occur in both vertical and horizontal forms and take shape in various dimensions of larger social, economic and political indicators. However, the level and scale of exclusion of a group is not in the same degree with respect to these various indicators. A group of people could be more excluded in social dimensions whereas the same group could be better off in social and political dimensions (Dahal, 2009).

In Nepal, spatial disparity is closely linked to the vertical as well as the horizontal differentiation of people. This is related to the natural environment and access to transport and communication services at the regional and national level. Another major facet of exclusion in Nepal is related to culture, language and religion on account of which some ethnic/caste groups are marginalized in terms of education and in human capital building efforts. Absence of social justice has created a gap in understanding the extent of social exclusion prevalent in society. Exclusion, in fact, has become a tradition and accepted as normalcy (CNAS, 2009). Exclusion in social relationships is normal. Because the vertical hierarchy of society leading to exclusion is entirely a cultural and political construct, it demands a good understanding of the formation of Nepal as a state and processes of Hinduization over the centuries.

The literature available on social exclusion and inclusion in Nepal has identified some issues such as that socially excluded groups lack access to various aspects of social, economic and political domains in state development. Similarly, the socially excluded groups have major social, economic and political grievances. Therefore, they are alienated from the state and from the ruling groups.

Historically, Muslims are one of the highly economically marginalized and socio-politically excluded groups in Nepal. Though, Muslims in general have themselves to blame for their low literacy rate and the consequent exclusion from mainstream yet, it is a fact that the state has substantially remained oblivious to the demands and requirements of the Muslim communities.

The nature of centralized state governance structures and other discriminatory practices in the country have contributed to the exclusion of these communities in the past. During the Rana regime (1848-1951), only family members and loyal supporters were entitled to socio-economic opportunities; their power was further strengthened by social exclusion in Nepal. During this feudal regime, any dissent, in the form of alternative institutions or ideologies, was brutally suppressed, and the privileges of the dominant group were further reinforced by the state (Thapa, 2009). After major political changes in 1951, there has been a centralization of power largely within three caste/ethnic groups (hill Brahmins, Chhetris and Newars) who constitute only 35 percent of the population in Nepal. The Muslims, Madhesis, indigenous peoples and other socio-religious minority groups have been largely excluded from the decision-making levels of the state. Therefore, they have been deprived of the opportunity to articulate their needs and priorities through forming government policy in their favor. Thus, due to their exclusion from decision-making and policy making frameworks, they have remained poor, illiterate and exploited in Nepal. The adverse effects on development of unequal opportunities and an unfavorable political regime are even more damaging because the educational, economic, social and political disadvantages are repeatedly reinforced over generations. Against this backdrop, this study examines the social exclusion situation among the Muslim communities and the role of education in their social inclusion in Nepal.

Nepal has remained unitary and secular Hindu state for over 240 years after the unification and has been ruled by the high caste Brahmins. The Caste system was a state protected ideology in Nepal, which played a key role in shaping the character of the national society, where hill castes, through their cultural legacy, continue to dominate the political power structure of the modern Nepali state. The state has imposed one religion, one language and a one-culture policy and Nepali language has long been the only national and official language and mode of education in the country.

Of course, Urdu is the mode of education in Madrasas throughout Nepal and Urdu is a *lingua franca* among the majority of Muslim communities. Linguistically, the Muslims are a minority group facing an adverse situation in with respect to education, employment and administration. Similarly, Pahadi (people of hill origin) have long dominated the social, economic and political power of Nepal over Muslims and Madhesis (people of plains origin). Madhesh or Terai is homeland for more than 95 percent Nepali Muslims. Muslims constitute the largest population group of five Terai districts, namely Rautahat, Bara, Parsa, Kapilbastu and Banke. However, none of these districts has a high Human Development Index (HDI). In Banke, Muslims constitute the largest group (21%) within the total population of the district, which is in 46th place in the HDI rankings out of the 75 districts in the country (NESAC, 1998).

The Muslims have been facing multiple disadvantages, as a minority religious and linguistic group as well as inhabitants of disadvantaged areas. The marginalization of Muslims is evident by the lower values for Muslims in all the indicators of HDI (life expectancy, income, literacy, etc.), as well as some indicators of economic development and their representation in the national legislature. The national average HDI value is 0.509, compared to an average of 0.401 for Muslims. Additionally, 41 percent of the Muslim population lives below the poverty line, 10 percent more than the national average of 31 percent. Between 1995 and 2003, the reduction in the number of Muslims living below the poverty line was only 2 percent, compared to 11 percent reduction in poverty at the national level overall. Moreover, the number of Muslim representatives in the national legislature has always been proportionally lower than the size of the Muslim population (NESAC, 1998).

The lower HDI for Muslims derives largely from their very low educational attainment compared to other components of HDI. Their low human development or capability hinders their representation and participation, which, in turn, perpetuates their low level of human development. In the modern world, education is the basic source of knowledge and one of the main agents/vehicles for social change and social inclusion in society. Educational attainment influences other indicators of human development and opportunities in many ways. However, the literacy rate among Muslim communities is lower than the national average and their performance in higher-level

educational institutions is very low in comparison to other caste/ethnic groups in the country. This is the major cause of social exclusion of Muslims in Nepal.

## **1.2 Importance of Education in Human Life in Relation to Social Inclusion and Exclusion**

Education is essential for the progress of society and development of a nation. Education plays a prominent role in creating a patriotic, disciplined and productive human resource. Through education, individuals can enhance their personalities and contribute towards the progress of society. Education is of paramount importance for the proper growth and development of the individual. It plays an important role in one's life in the sense that it helps in shaping the right kind of lifestyle of human beings. Education, formal or informal aims at developing the positive quality of the child and helps the individual realize ones potential.

Steve et al. (2001) argued that education is generally considered to be about acquiring and using knowledge, and developing skills and understanding cognitive capabilities as humans. We are identified by our capacity to learn, communicate and reason and we are involved in this endeavor throughout our lives and in all situations.

The focus on the function of education is the benefit that education brings to the whole of a given society. Steve concluded that education is seen alongside other social institutions as working to create and maintain a stable society. Through education systems, basic academic skills such as reading, writing and communication, which are also deemed social skills and regarded as important and vital for human life, can be cultivated and developed. Human beings are social creatures, and education is a process of socialization, which is an induction into society's culture, norms and values. Education provides the knowledge of the norms, the norms of being well behaved and respecting the law. The provision of education can also be deemed as the preparation for future work. Abilities and capabilities are developed through school life, so, it can be seen that education is the resource and initiative for the preparation of adult skills.

From the sociological point of view, functionalists believe that all parts of society function together to contribute to society in a positive way. Emile Durkheim, a functionalist, sees the education system as a transmission of society's norms and values. He also says education promotes a feeling of homogeneity amongst people. His

emphasis was on schools creating cooperation and a sense of social solidarity. He described education as a bridge between the home and wider society, preparing individuals for their roles later in life. He also saw the positive link between school rules and the rules of society, teaching children to accept rules from an early age.

Education is often perceived as the aggregate of all the processes by which a person develops abilities, attitudes and forms of behavior with practical value to the society in which he or she lives. Education is understood as the influential force to build up a country economically, socially and culturally. These challenges have to be accepted by the educationists, which are the real builders of the nation. Only properly planned and organized education, contributes positively to the social welfare of all (Aryal, 1970).

Literacy is the ability to read and write whereas education is the systematic instruction to gain knowledge. Quality education produces knowledgeable people who are the shining signs of civilization, and contribute to the positive development of a country. Today's world has been progressing in every field due to the promotion and expansion of education. It is through education that human beings acquire knowledge of their past and can then relate it to the present in order to visualize the future. Education helps shape the individual, culture and society. The crucial necessity in the development of society is to improve education and skills. Education and development are continual process. Educated people apply scientific technology to responsibly manage local resources.

Education is not a luxury to be afforded after development has occurred. It is an integral part, an inescapable and essential aspect of the development process. Hence, education plays a vital role in the modification of human behavior and socio-cultural change (Harson, 1966).

Bennett and Silva (2006) write that children should never be denied an education on the basis of location, caste, ethnicity, gender or abilities to acquire relevant knowledge.

Therefore, education is essential for all individuals and groups in society in order to enhance their capability and quality of life. In the modern context, education is considered a universal human right. One of the goals of EFA-2015 is to eliminate educational disparities worldwide. The present constitutions of Nepal and India also emphasize fundamental rights to education to all the citizens of the country.

However, educational disparities are prevalent all over the world. The degree of disparity varies among the different groups and communities on the basis of gender, caste/ethnicity, income, occupation, religion, culture and geography. All over the world, children from minority and marginalized groups are facing the challenges of poverty and exclusion from mainstream education and educational institutions.

According to Hopper and Osborn (1975), society has a fundamental problem, which involves finding and training them (society members) early in the life cycle, recruiting them into specific segments of the labor market, and regulating their values and normative expectations at various phases of this process.

With different educational provision, pupils are cultivated in different styles and may result in different norms or values. Turner argued that this is the most conspicuous means of controlling people by ensuring loyalty in the disadvantaged classes. Educational inequalities are also regarded as a crucial variable in the reproduction of social inequalities (Ahier et al., 1996).

In Nepal, there are huge educational disparities between and among the different castes and ethnic groups. The national educational level is very low and most human resource is labor-oriented with marginal output. Another problem is the pronounced discrepancy in access to education across the social groups. The majority of indigenous nationalities, Muslims and Madhesis have a low literacy rate as compared with the national average. On the other hand, certain caste groups monopolize higher education. Similarly, female literacy rate among these groups is very low in comparison to the national average. The enrollment and dropout rates (age 6-10) of girls among the Muslims are well behind that of boys. In the Muslim community, both boys' and girls' enrollment rate is lower than other high caste groups.

### **1.3 History of Development of Education in Nepal**

Education is the pillar of the overall development of a country, which is essential for every human being and collectively the nation. In ancient times, the concept of schooling originated among high caste Hindu people, the Brahmans. By the middle of the fifth century under the rule of the Lichhavi dynasty, little attention was paid to people's education and the education of the common people was seen as an extra burden (Sharma, 1986). The succeeding regime, the Malla dynasty (879-1768) showed

an interest in educating people but through their education system, they were able to reach only high class people who were the ruling class family and the families of the traditional priests or pundits. The development of education in Nepal did not progress much before the Rana period because the rulers were preoccupied with waging war in an effort to expand their states. During the Rana regime (1846-1950), the rulers paid attention to the development of education in the country in order to run the administration and to train the Brahman boys for performing religious rites.

One of the Rana Prime Ministers, Bir Shamsheer, opened the first western-type school named Durbar High School (government school). Tri-Chandra College, the first college of the country was established in 1918. It was administered first by Calcutta University and later by Patna University. The First School Leaving Certificate (SLC) board was established in 1934, in Nepal. Only one female named Sabina Kumari applied for a school leaving certificate and not a single woman applied for a college education before 1947 (Sharma, 1986). The state's first national education act, the Education Code of 1940, authorized the opening of community-managed schools throughout the country and was therefore an important step in the development of formalized education policy in Nepal. The successive Rana prime minister after Chandra Shamsheer started opening schools in the Katmandu Valley and other parts of the country. However, participation of the students was only from higher class or caste people. It is not surprising then that Daniel Wright, writing about the number of schools in Nepal before 1951, said that the subject of schools and colleges in Nepal might be treated as snakes in Ireland; there is none (Wright, 1872).

The record, however, shows that there were in fact a handful of schools and students. Although, about 98 percent of the 8.2 million people of Nepal were literate in 1951 (CBS, 1952/54). Muslims had been excluded from formal schooling for centuries and not given an equal opportunity to make education their cultural capital or use education to transform their knowledge into cultural capital.

Before 1940, Muslims were not allowed to attend any schools. After the 1940s, Muslims were allowed to attend secondary schools and colleges and the Rana government eventually opened a Muslim primary school. With the declaration of free primary

education up to class 5 for all Nepalese children, the number of Muslims attending the school has steadily increased.

Hence, the real progress of education development in the country began only after the dawn of democracy in 1951. After the restoration of democracy, various attempts were made to move educational programs forward and make them comprehensive in a systematic way and align them with democratic norms and values, based on the demand of time and aspirations of people.

Since then, there have been sustained efforts to develop a national system of education that best fits the national and individual requirements. In addition to various high level commissions<sup>1</sup> to identify reform agendas on education, several national plans and projects<sup>2</sup> have been implemented since the 1970s (MOES, 2005). These efforts were further enhanced with the restoration of a multiparty democracy in 1990 and the introduction of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) which, regarded education as one of the fundamental rights. This constitutional provision encouraged the introduction of special policies for educating girls, other disadvantaged groups such as indigenous nationalities, Muslims, Madhesis and Dalits, who have been historically marginalized in Nepal.

Education in the Ninth Plan (1997-2001) remained as a central policy for the effective alleviation of poverty for and all-round development. Therefore, democracy has played a vital role in the development of education. The government has also placed educational institutions high on its list of priorities. Five decades have passed since the installation of democracy and Nepal is still far behind in the educational development in the real sense.

---

<sup>1</sup> The formation of Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) in 1954 and its report (NNEPC, 1956), the formation of All Round National Education Committee and its report (ARNEC, 1961), the formulation of National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971) and its implementation, the formation of National Education Commission (NEC) in 1990 and its report (NEC, 1992), and the formation of the High Level National Education Commission and its report (HLNEC, 1998) are examples of various national level commissions to analyze the situation of education in the country and make appropriate recommendations.

<sup>2</sup> The National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971), Education for Rural Development, the Seti Project (1981-1992), Primary Education Project (1984-1992), Science Education development Project 1983, Basic and Primary Education Project Phase I (1993-1998), Secondary Education Perspective Plan (1997), Basic and Primary Education Project Phase II (1999-2004), Secondary Education Development Project (1993-2000), and the Secondary Education Development Plan (2001) are the main plans and projects. In 1989, the Higher Secondary Education Board was established with the purpose of implementing 10+2 program under the Higher Education Act.



The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) had the overarching national goal of poverty reduction and regarded education as one of the major means to achieve this goal. The Plan emphasized the need for knowledge building, human resource development and sustained human productivity, gender and social equity, inclusion and empowerment, and economic growth for poverty reduction. Similarly, the government has approved the Education for All National Plan of Action (2001-2015), which has adapted the six goals of the Dakar Framework of Action agreed to in 2000 to fit the national context. Drawing from these two plans, a five-year strategic plan called Education for All (EFA) (2004-2009), has been developed and implemented since 2004.

Similarly, for the improvement of secondary education, Nepal has implemented a five-year Secondary Education Support Program from 2003 to 2008, with the objective of improving equity, access, quality, relevance and institutional capacity of secondary education.

Nepal has accepted education as a primary means to the all-round development of children. Various efforts have been made to bring education within a closer reach of all in society. Education is one of the major sectors in which Nepal has made remarkable progress over the past 50 years. At present, the Ministry of Education (MOE) coordinates educational activities throughout the country. The Ministry is responsible for educational planning, management and service delivery system's improvement across the country.

EFA by 2015 has been the most prioritized program of the government. EFA was introduced as a follow up of Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP-I) in 1992 and BPEP-II in 1999. The donors' communities and the government of Nepal have started EFA in July 2004. The Higher Secondary Education Board has developed a perspective plan and University Grants commission (UGC) is now involved with preparing an umbrella policy for all higher education sub-sector of Nepal.

Nepal is making additional efforts to provide access to primary education to all children aged 5-9. Education for all targets has been shifted from 2000 to 2015 following recommendations of the Dakar Conference. Enforcement of the universal primary education policy has been a challenge in Nepal. Several factors such as the economic condition of the families, socio-cultural beliefs, unachieved expectations of

parents/students, shortfalls in quality and relevance of school education, and blanket policy of the government can be attributed to this situation. Nevertheless, the government is persistent in its endeavor to achieve universal primary education through decentralized planning and management of school education. Both Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) and Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) at secondary level indicate that the quantitative performance of the secondary education sub-sector is less than satisfactory. The literacy rate of 6 year- olds and above, for example, is only 54.1 percent and the Net Enrollment rate in the primary level is 84 percent, for the lower secondary is 39.4 percent, and for the secondary level is only 25.5 percent (MOES, 2004). Moreover, only about 20 percent of those enrolled in grade one complete grade five in five years. These indicators suggest that a significant percentage of school-aged children continue to remain outside the education system, and that there is a low internal efficiency and low quality of education that does not serve the labor market. Access to higher secondary level education also has not been possible to all eligible children especially for disadvantaged and marginalized groups due to social, economic, religious and cultural barriers.

#### **1.4 Social Exclusion and Educational Situation of Muslims in Nepal**

Social exclusion is the consequence of a power relationship that places a person or group at a disadvantaged position, resulting in the reduction of social, political, economic, rights, and the ability and opportunity to access resources and to participate in decision-making. In Nepal, there is no single set of indicators of socially excluded groups, which explain the exact form of exclusion. Socially excluded groups are not defined in a single agreeable definition in the Nepalese context. Different institutions, professionals and academics have defined the concept in different ways. This is further complicated by the plethora of words that refer to those considered excluded; disadvantaged, marginalized, downtrodden and oppressed (Gurung, 2007).

Numerically, all castes/ethnic groups, in Nepal, are minorities and the largest one, Chhetri constitutes 15.8 percent of the total population. However, hill Brahman and Chhetri, who together comprise 28.5 percent of the total population, have long been treated as the majority group because of their dominant position within the power structure of the country. Others, who have been historically discriminated against are

treated as minorities. Thus, the majority-minority division emanated from the power exercised by the dominant groups over the other groups, which subsequently was reformulated into a dominant group and a minority group.

The Government of Nepal has not yet officially defined the term “excluded group” in its policy document. The Tenth Plan (2002-2007), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), incorporated social inclusion as one of the four pillars. However, there are no any specific, targeted policies and programs for social inclusion of Muslims in Nepal.

Muslims are a major and third largest non-Hindu religious group in Nepal. The *Muluki Ain* 1854, which upholds strict implementation of the caste system based on the Hindu social code, categorized Muslims as impure untouchables. Referred as *Mlechchhas* (barbarians), Muslims were restricted and discriminated to the extent that only raw and dry eatables were acceptable from their hands. However, the New *Muluki Ain*, 1963 provided an equal citizen status to the Muslims and allowed them more freedom to practice their religion, however, social discrimination and inequality is still prevalent in the society.

Economic, educational and social indicators of Muslim community are relatively low due to non-recognition of their interests in the development efforts. The state’s periodic plans, which did not incorporate the concerns of the Muslims, failed to implement specific programs for the Muslim community.

In Nepal, Muslims are educationally disadvantaged groups with a lower literacy rate of 34.7 percent in comparison to national literacy rate of 53.7 percent. It is the third largest religious group of Nepal with a population of 4.2 percent (CBS, 2001).

The Banke district, the study area of this research, has one of the highest Muslim populations of any district in Nepal. Muslims in this district comprise 21.1 percent of the total population, the highest percentage of Muslim population in any district (CBS, 2001). The Muslim literacy rate in Banke district is 37 percent, which is far below the district literacy rate of 57.8 percent. The adult literacy rate is only 30.3 percent in comparison to the national average of 53.7 percent. In Nepal, the male literacy rate is 81 percent and female literacy is 54.5 percent, whereas, Muslim female literacy rate is only 26.5 percent as compared to 61.8 percent of their male counterparts (NHDR, 2009).

According to the Quran, every Muslim child should pursue his or her own education as far as possible. However, beyond words, this concept does not exist in practice in Muslim communities. Before 1940, Muslims were not allowed to attend any Nepali schools. Later on, they were allowed to attend school but conservative Muslim did not allow their children especially girls, access to education. Only a few were given the chance to continue their education. Even today, the educational condition of Muslims is not satisfactory. Firstly, Muslims emphasize reading of religious books like Quran. Most of the females are limited to this type of learning and some receive primary and secondary education in Madrasa. During the Rana period, Muslim primary schools were opened and it is still running as a Madrasa Islamic institution.

Presently, a large number of Madrasas are established in the Terai region. Muslims themselves manage the Madrasas, to give their children the basic Islamic education, enable them to recite the Holy Quran in their native Arabic language and to know the ways of prayer (Perwez et al., 2003). Generally, Madrasas and Maktabas run on the donations (Jakat) provided by Muslims. There are some fundamental differences between Madrasa and Maktabas. Maktabas are generally found in the Village Development Committees (VDCs) and are associated with mosques providing religious (Islamic) education only. Madrasas may be independent of mosques and provide both religious and academic education.

According to the Islamic Sangh Nepal, there are over 3000 Madrasas in Nepal. However, the ministry of education disagrees with this figure stating that fewer than 1000 Islamic institutions are registered presently. However, the ministry accepts the operation of several Madrasas without legal registration and uniform curriculum in the country.

Some Muslims in Nepal continue to study Urdu and Persian in India and Gulf countries (Salam, 2005). Muslim children start their reading and writing process from Madrasas. Most of the girls are only limited to Madrasas education. Madrasas are established in 28 districts in Nepal. Out of the 28 districts, 18 are in Terai and 10 are in the hills. Rautahat district has the largest number of students in Madrasa and Lalitpur has the lowest. Moreover, parents forbid the education of female children while promoting educate for boys in government and private schools.

The government of Nepal is making various efforts to educate Muslim children. Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) has included Muslims as a special focus group and has developed special policies and programs to increase the access of this group to mainstream education. All policies and programs have been developed in line with the EFA. Accordingly, the goal is to ensure that all children will have quality basic and primary education by 2015.

The interim constitution (2007) has recognized a need for educating children in their mother tongues. The provision made in the Education Act (7th Amendment) for the use of the mother tongue in primary classes has been a positive step towards addressing the instructional needs of indigenous and linguistic minority children across the country.

UNICEF has launched a pilot project with an aim of mainstreaming the Madrasas. This project has provided mainstream subject teachers in select Madrasas of Kapilbastu district, with books and stationery for the students who were in Grade I last year and are in Grade 2 this year. This program is running in 17 Madrasas in Kapilbastu. UNICEF had appointed Twenty-four teachers for this purpose.

Similarly, Save the Children/US has organized a motivational program for Muslims in Nepalgunj. The purpose of this program is to motivate Muslim children towards mainstream education. It has provided incentives to 300 Muslim children and enrolled them in mainstream schools.

Despite these efforts, the literacy rate of Muslims remains behind in comparison to national literacy and other high caste peoples. The low literacy rate among Muslims indicates that they have been excluded from schooling in the past, which has potentially led to their exclusion from society. There may be various causes for Muslims' low educational status and some of these instances derived from different literature are presented below.

Muslims were not allowed to attend any Nepalese schools until the 1940s due to orthodox Hindus considered them as untouchable (Siddika, 1993). The first Madrasa of Muslims was established in 1941 A.D, but the conservative Muslims did not encourage their children, especially girls to go to school. The differences in religious faith of minority Muslims with majority Hindus might be a cause for their poor educational

achievement. Ballantine (1983) has reported that religious beliefs might also serve as an agent to retard change, especially if the changes threaten their belief system.

A Nepalese education system adopted a policy of national integration based on the formation of common language and values. The major commissions formed to decide policies on education in the past, such as NNEPC (1956) and ARNEC (1962) have made recommendations for a common national curriculum and Nepali as the medium of instruction. These recommendations did not pay attention to heterogeneity and emphasized homogeneity. Primary education in the mother tongue was adopted as a policy only after the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990. In its recommendation, NEC (1992) advocated for primary education in the mother tongue and ended the hegemony of Nepali as the only language of instruction in schools. HLNEC (1998) is the first commission, which considered the education of minority communities such as marginalized castes, language minorities, caste minorities, and economically challenged groups and suggested special provisions to increase their access in education. Although the Nepalese education system as well as constitution does not discriminate against anyone based on caste, religion, race and gender, the poor educational status of Muslims may be an effect of the policies of past, institutional, and structural barriers within the society.

Helen (1971) stated that the standard curriculum and teaching methods that work well in an open community might require considerable revision in order to have any impact on the students in a closed community. Muslims in Nepal are a closed community. A closed community is one characterized by a tightly knit internal structure that attempts by various means to shut off influences from the outside world. Due to their distinct religious differences with the Hindus, the Muslims of Nepal may be identified as a closed community. Therefore, their low enrollment in mainstream education may be a problem of self-exclusion instead of active exclusion from society.

### **1.5 Statement of the Problem**

Nepal, a Himalayan country characterized by the mystifying gamut of ethnic, linguistic, religious, geographical, social and cultural diversities, lies between India and China. Topographically, Nepal can be broadly divided into three regions namely Mountain, Hill and Terai, which extend from east to west. Thus, Nepal is known for its ecological

and social diversity and complexity. Nepal is a plural state with 102 caste/ethnic groups, 59 indigenous nationalities, 8 religious groups and 92 language groups with the total population of 23,151,423 (CBS, 2001).

In Nepal, the hill Brahman, Chhetris and Newars have a strong hold in civil service, armies, police, politics and other decision-making levels of the state while Muslims, Madhesis and other minority groups have few opportunities at those levels of the state. In this regard, the present research study focus on Muslims as one of the religious minority groups in Nepal.

Muslims are one of the educationally disadvantaged, economically marginalized and socially excluded minority groups in Nepal. Their exclusion from different spheres of social life is clearly reflected in their low literacy, high poverty rate and low representation in the civil service, police, military and other decision-making levels of the state. Muslims are one of the poorest groups in Nepal compared to other high caste groups. NESAC (2004) has reported that Muslims have a low share in the position related to decision making. The literacy rate of the Muslim is 34.7 percent, which is lower than the national literacy rate of 53.7 percent. Social exclusion is the major cause for their low literacy rate and low representation in decision-making levels. Muslims have their own education institution named, Madrasa and Maktabas. Presently, the majority of Muslims prefer to send their children to Madrasa in comparison to mainstream schools.

Since 2007, the government of Nepal has started to register Madrasas at Department of Education (DEO) as community schools without registration fee. However, the Madrasa education is not fully recognized yet by the state and the registered Madrasas are not getting facilities from the government as other community schools do.

Politically, hill Brahman-Chhetri and the Newars have a strong hold on national politics, while the Muslims and Madhesis (Terai) have been deprived of the various opportunities of the state.

After the restoration of democracy, social inclusion became a main policy and political agenda in Nepal. However, the issues of Muslims and minority groups are still unresolved and so they are compelled to demonstrate these inequalities during street

rallies. Their desire to be included in society is raised in different forums yet thus far, their problems remain relatively unheard, and so remain unresolved.

Therefore, this research is primarily concerned with the study of exclusion issues of Muslims and the causes of their lower access to mainstream education, which has allegedly led to their social exclusion. The ultimate aim of this research is to develop appropriate measures for their social inclusion into national mainstream society through education. It is obvious that education is the primary vehicle for social inclusion of any groups in society. Education can develop the capability of any person or group in the bargaining of power sharing and it can promote skills for income generation. Education can also develop a sense of coexistence and harmony by creating a common culture in the community. Therefore, the present study attempts to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the economic status of Muslims?
2. What is the educational status in Muslim communities?
3. What are the main hindrances towards their access in mainstream education?
4. Are they being discriminated in their access to education?
5. What is the role of Madrasas in educating Muslim children?
6. What is their representation in the civil service, politics and other decision-making bodies?
7. Do the constitution, laws and rules of the state discriminate against them?
8. How do their gender, religion, culture, place of residence and economic status affect their access to education?
9. What are the perceptions of Muslims towards education?
10. How does their access to education affect their political, economic and social inclusion/exclusion?
11. What steps have been taken by the state to bring Muslim communities into mainstream education?
12. What is the socio-economic status of Muslims in northern (Uttarpradesh) India?



## **1.6 Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this research is to study the Role of Education in Social Inclusion of Muslims in Nepal. The specific objectives are:

- to study the role of socio-economic status of Muslims to their access to education,
- to explore the causes/factors of low/non participation of Muslim children in government schools in Nepal,
- to study the role of Madrasas in educating Muslims in Nepal,
- to explore the measures for educating Muslims in Nepal,
- to study the social, economic and educational status of Muslims in northern India in comparison to Nepal.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This detailed study of exclusion situation of Muslims and the role of education in their social inclusion in Nepal is useful for furthering the sociological understanding of social exclusion and inclusion of minority groups and the role of education in tackling social exclusion in a given community and country.

Education is regarded as an important component of economic and social development contributing significantly to a country's overall development and reducing the incidence of poverty. It has been perceived as a force for enhancing the capacity of the people in terms of improving appropriate life skills, knowledge and experiential wisdom to acquire economic and social prosperity. Realizing this fact, Nepal has made commitments to Education for All and Millennium Development Goals. These commitments were made to ensure basic and primary education for all children, irrespective of their ethnic origin, religion, culture or linguistic heritage or disabilities.

Much emphasis was placed on enhancing access and quality of education on the basis of a premise that education is a fundamental right for all people. Various initiatives have been taken by the state to increase the access to education for marginalized and disadvantaged children. However, the education situation among the marginalized groups, particularly Muslims, is still far behind in comparison to national literacy rates and high caste groups due to their low access to education and social inequality and

exclusion as well as formal and informal institutional barriers to their participation in education.

Social exclusion is one of the major causes for the low literacy rate of Muslims and representation in decision-making bodies of the state. Nepal is a multiethnic, multicultural and multi religious country in nature but social discrimination, inequality and exclusion based on social identity of race, religion, language, culture, nationality, ethnicity and caste are the prominent features in the history of Nepali society. The multiethnic nature of a country and the cleavages among the various ethnic groups for power and reward pose a great barrier to promoting the feeling of national integration among its citizen with various ethnic backgrounds. This problem becomes more serious when a country includes various ethnic groups in which some groups are in the majority and some group are in minority status.

The higher population provides more opportunity for the majority group to acquire the decision-making positions in the country, which ultimately provides them greater access in different opportunities related to livelihood. The majority group enjoys all the privileges related to power and rewards because of its greater access to decision-making positions thus limiting the chances of minority groups in these aspects. It leads to discrimination towards the minority groups. The gap between the majority and minority group further widens if these groups possess some distinct traits, which differentiate them and lead to the prejudice and discrimination towards the minority group. These traits may be difference of origin, race, color, religion, caste etc. It leads to a situation of social exclusion for the minority group.

The socially excluded group of people slowly detach themselves from the mainstream of society. Their lack of access to different aspects of social processes develops a prejudice towards the majority groups and the policies made for and by them. They turn into themselves creating a closed community, which is considered a case of self-exclusion. They do not easily accept the endeavors of the majority group for the betterment of total society because of the mistrust against the policies made by the majority. The socially excluded groups have major economic and political grievances, as a group, which combined with their cultural affinities to make them liable to challenge authority with violence.

Nepal is a multiethnic, multilingual, multi religious and multicultural country. Despite the immense ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity, a significant number of the population has largely been unable to participate in the mainstream development processes because of the exclusionary policies and practices of the state. The dominant groups of Nepal have traditionally enjoyed near-monopoly over the civil and military administration, which have been supported by the centralized state machineries for centuries. The feudal socio-economic and political structures have excluded the general masses of Muslims, indigenous nationalities, Madhesi, women and Dalits from mainstream development.

As a result of such practices of inequality, the historic ten years People's War (1996-2006) took place in the country. In recent years, Nepal witnessed rapid and unprecedented political changes. In 2006, the Peoples' Movement II ended the King's direct rule and reinstated the dissolved parliament. Despite these political changes, the Constituent Assembly has failed to ratify a new constitution in Nepal in its four-year period due to the vain political interests of major political parties such as Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal (UML), Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and Madhesi Forum. On 27 May 2012, the Constituent Assembly received its legal termination and Prime Minister Babu Ram Bhattarai declared the date of fresh elections to the Constituent Assembly for November 22, 2012. Owing to these political changes, the conflicting situation in the country has subsided and undergone major shifts over the past few years.

Despite these positive changes, poverty, injustice and poor governance are persisting in the country. Civil strife and protests accompanied by frequent *bandhs* (closures) and violence are still common events as various sections of the people on the basis of ethnic and geographical diversity demand recognition and inclusion of their agenda in the new constitution.

Social inclusion of Muslims and other minority groups is the major issue in the present context of Nepal. However, the issues and problems of Muslims and minority groups are still relatively unheard and remain unresolved. They are educationally disadvantaged, politically excluded, socially discriminated and economically marginalized groups in the country.

In the given context, this study helps to understand the socio-economic, political and educational situations of Muslims from a social inclusion and exclusion perspective. This study provides an insight into the mindset of minorities and the majority who have to deal with them directly or indirectly. The study also provides an opportunity for the minorities to reach out to the public creating an atmosphere of goodwill and better understanding

Furthermore, this study is helpful in understanding Muslims feelings, experiences of and perceptions toward Madrasa and mainstream education, school environment, curriculum, teachers as well as government policies of education, employment and politics at micro and macro levels. The study also helps policy makers to formulate inclusive policies regarding education, government employment and politics, which ultimately helps to bring Muslims into the nation building and mainstream development process of the country

The study markedly widens our knowledge of the role of Madrasas in meeting the needs of identity, community unification, knowledge dissemination and local traditions in Muslim communities. The findings of this study are helpful at both theoretical and practical levels for other minority groups in Nepal, who are facing similar kinds of problems and religious minorities of other countries as well.

Finally, Nepal is still in a new constitution making process. The Nepali peace agreements and major documents, including the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) and the Interim Constitution, all look to the transformation of state and society for promoting inclusion and more equitable development. In order to translate the inclusion agenda into reality, this study provides inputs for discussion from the minority rights, equity and human development point of view to some extent.

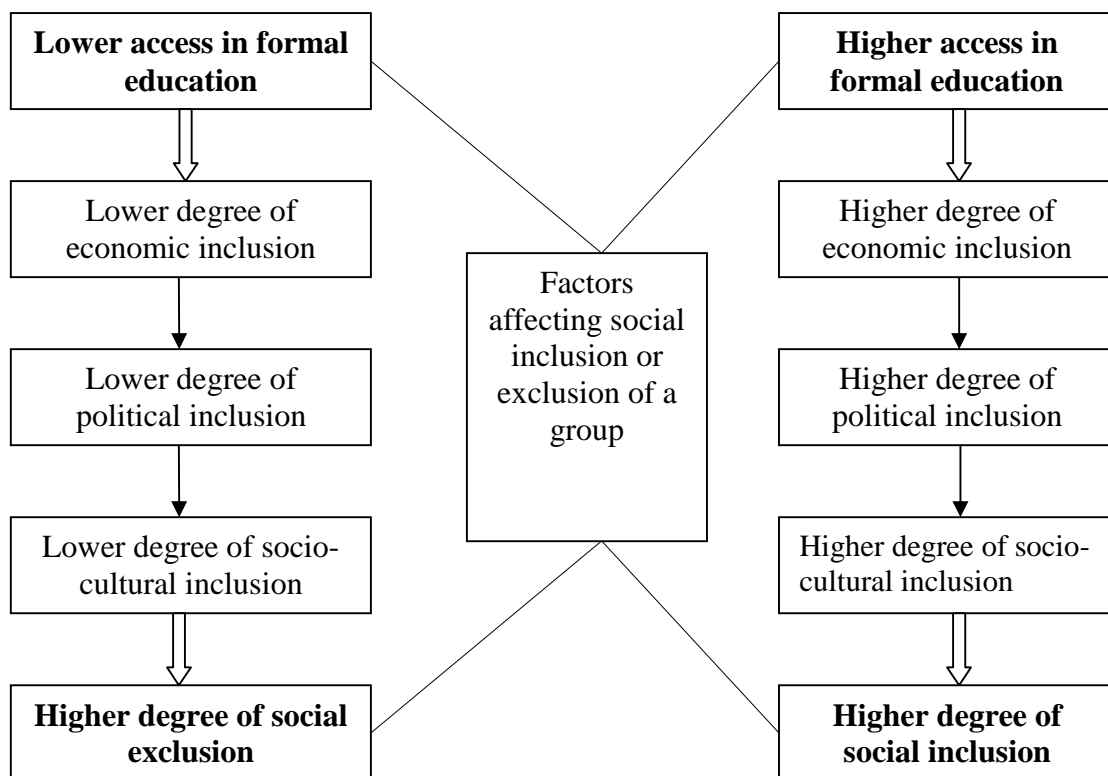
### **1.8 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

In the modern context, it is a widely accepted fact that education enhances human capability, and serves to reduce poverty and social inequality. Actually, most researchers report that education is instrumental in breaking the effects of social and economic disadvantages and reduces social exclusion. The power of education lies in its ability to endow an individual with both the cognitive and non-cognitive resources and skills which they need in order to achieve social inclusion. However, the

relationships between education and poverty, inequality and social exclusion are neither mechanical nor linear. Although education can break the circles of social disadvantages, it may also contribute to produce and enhance these very circles. The main aim of this research is to investigate the social exclusion situation of Muslims, with respect to the links between education and social exclusion in Nepalese society.

In this study, education is taken as an independent variable and social exclusion, in terms of economic, political and socio-cultural exclusion are considered dependent variables. The investigation is whether the social exclusion of Muslims in the political, economic and socio-cultural arenas is a product of the lower access of Muslims to formal education. The conceptual framework of inclusion and exclusion is presented below.

### Conceptual Framework of Exclusion and Inclusion



(Source: Adapted from Rana et al., 2009)

Increased access to formal education by a particular group or community leads to a higher degree of social inclusion in different spheres of life in society. Similarly, lower

access to formal education leads to a lower degree of economic, political and socio-cultural inclusion, which ultimately causes a higher degree of social exclusion. Therefore, this study analyses the relationship between lower attainment in formal education and the social exclusion of Muslims from social exclusion and inclusion perspectives.

## **1.9 Research Methodology**

This section details the selection of study areas, methods and procedures of sample selection, data collection methods, tools and analysis procedure used in this study. It also enlists the research design, ethical considerations, limitations of the study and the validity procedure employed for the consistency of data and information as well.

### **1.9.1 The Study Area and Methods of Samples Selection**

The quality of an educational research project should be based not only on the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also on the suitability of sampling strategy (Morrison, 1993 & Cohen et al., 2003). Due to the limitations of gaining information from the whole population, a smaller group was chosen to represent the whole population.

In Nepal, Muslims are widely dispersed over almost all the 72 districts of Nepal. Yet, more than 95 percent of the total Muslim population of Nepal lives in only 19 districts of the Terai (CBS, 2001).

The Banke district of Nepal, which has a high percentage of Muslim population, was purposively selected for the in-depth field study. However, Saptari, Rautahat, Janakpur, and Kapilbastu districts were also visited to collect more qualitative information and to verify data collected from Banke district.

The study areas in the respective districts were also selected based on the high concentration of Muslim population. For this study, Jaispur and Puraini Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Nepalgunj Municipality from Banke district were selected. Additionally, four wards from Jaispur, two wards from Puraini and two wards from Nepalgunj municipality were selected. Similarly, Saijana Panchayat, Laharpurwa from Bahraich district of India were also selected for the study.

In an effort to ensure that the data are equally representative of the Muslim population in Nepal, Jaispur VDC was selected because it is connected by motorable road, is close to the district headquarter at Banke and is adjacent to the border of Uttar Pradesh (India) while Purani, located in the countryside and housing one of the poorest Muslim communities in the district represents the other extreme. Nepalgunj is the district headquarters of Banke. Similarly, the Laharpurwa village of Baharaich district of India is an adjacent village to the bank district of Nepal.

For the household survey, out of the sampled wards, 30 percent or 350 households were selected by applying a simple random sampling method. For this study, 350 households were selected from Banke district of Nepal and 50 households were selected from the Laharpurwa village of Baharaich district of India. The key informants, focus group participants and individuals for the case studies were selected through a snowball-sampling method. The social and demographic composition of respondents in the fields is given in table 1.1.

Out of the total 350 respondents of Banke, 90.9 percent were males and 9.1 percent were females. During the study period, it was found that usually Muslims do not allow females to interact with an outsider therefore the majority of the respondents were males. As a result of the cultural and religious sensitivity of the issue, the researcher was constrained to be content with the views collected from only 9.1 percent of females from Nepal, in the absence of female respondents from India.

While considering the age structure of respondents by sex, a majority (94 percent) were between the 15-59 age groups, considered to represent the economically active population. It is noted that the proportion of elderly Muslims is lower (1.1 percent) compared to 6 percent of the total Muslim population of Nepal.

**Table 1.1** Distributions of Respondents by Age, Sex, Mother Tongue, Religion and Marital Status

		Nepal				India		
	Sex	Male	Female	Number	Percent	Male	Total	Percent
		318	32	350	100	50	50	100
Age group	0-14	3	-	3	0.9	1	1	2
	15-59	300	29	329	94.0	43	43	86
	60 +	15	3	18	5.1	6	6	12
	Total	318	32	350	100	50	50	100
Mother tongue	Urdu	4	-	4	1.1			
	Awadhi	314	32	346	98.9	50	50	100
	Total	318	32	350		50	50	100
Religion	Islam	318	32	100	100	50	50	100
Marital Status	Married	291	27	318	90.9	47	47	94
	Unmarried	15	-	15	4.2	3	9	6
	Widow/ widower	12	5	17	4.9	-	-	-
	Total	318	90.7	32	9.3	50	50	100

Source Field Survey, 2011

In India, out of a total 50 respondents, 86 percent were between the 15-59 age groups and the economically inactive population was 12 percent, which is higher than the national average of 7.45 percent of the country.

In India, Muslims speak Urdu language as their mother tongue and in Nepal; the majority of the Muslims speak Awadhi as their mother tongue.

Besides mother tongue, a majority of the Nepali Muslims speak Nepali, Urdu and Hindi as well. In India, they also speak Hindi, a national language of India, and Awadhi in daily communication within and outside their community. An absolute majority of Muslims of both countries in the study area follows Islam.



### **1.9.2 Research Methods and Sources of Data**

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied to carry out this study. In social sciences research, both qualitative and quantitative data are important, which are complementary to each other (Neuman, 1997).

To achieve the objectives of the study, data and information were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary information was collected from field surveys by using a variety of methods and tools. Quantitative information on the socio-economic and political condition of Muslims was collected through household surveys with the help of a structured questionnaire. Qualitative information was collected through focus group discussions, key informant interview, and case studies to supplement the individual household, and community level data.

Secondary sources of information were collected from published and unpublished books, research reports, journals, articles, government education policy reports, and legal and constitutional provisions for minorities' educations and their rights.

During fieldwork, almost 8 months was spent in the study area by the researcher. The first field visit was conducted between October 2010 and February 2011. Substantial time was spent on rapport building and information collection on the social, economical, educational and political situation of Muslims in the study area. During this period, qualitative information from Muslim social/political/religious leaders, academicians, schoolteachers, Maulvis and some senior members of the community was collected. Information from the district education office, district development committee, village development committee, health posts, colleges, boarding schools, banks and NGOs of Banke was also gathered. This visit helped with understanding the feelings and opinions of Muslims on various subjects and provided a closer look at the real ground reality of Muslims in the study area.

The second visit was conducted between January and March 2012 for cross checking and verifying earlier collected information and collecting more required information for the study. This time more time was spent with key informants and participants of FGDs.

### **1.9.3 Data Collection Methods, Tools and Techniques**

Data collection methods and tools in this study were designed for collecting data from different perspectives. In line with the research interests and research questions, the use of household surveys, key informant interviews, FGDs, observations and case study methods provided a broad perspective towards current exclusion/inclusion issues and the role of education in the social inclusion of Muslims in Nepal. Research methods and tools applied in this study were aimed at gathering information from participants' experiences, perceptions, reactions and interpretations towards social exclusion of Muslims.

#### **1.9.3.1 Household Survey**

During the field study, a total of 400 household surveys were conducted to collect detail household information. The data and information were collected from each household head of the sample households. A structured questionnaire was employed for the study. Information related to age, sex, religion, marital status, education, land holding, the house condition, occupation, income, expenditure, food sufficiency, employment, health, social and political participation etc. were derived from the household survey.

The household survey also provided information about the barriers faced by Muslims in education and gave an insight to the precepts of Muslims about education.

The household survey was conducted November 2010 to February 2011. Prior to this, two preliminary site visits were conducted in the selected villages for other research purposes. This helped to establish good personal contact and relation with Muslim leaders, social workers and the community people in the field. This was instrumental in being able to collect necessary information successfully.

#### **1.9.3.2 Key Informant Interviews**

A total of 65 key informant interviews were conducted during the study period. The key informants were selected by applying the snowball-sampling method. The main objective of this interview was to find out the reasons behind the inhibitions and impediments of Muslims in mainstream education and to understand and design accordingly the required strategies for increasing access of Muslim children in

mainstream education, leading to their inclusion in the mainstream nation-building processes. The Maulvis, Muslim intellectuals, religious and social leaders of Muslim community and local school teachers were considered as key informants for this study. Similarly, interviews of politicians, human rights activists, government officials, NGO and INGO workers were also taken into consideration to make the findings of the study more viable. Interviews with key informants were carried out based on an interview guideline prepared for this study.

A cassette recorder was used to tape the interviews after obtaining permission from the informants. At the same time, notes were taken about the main points during the interviews. Key informant interviews were employed as a vehicle for deepening the knowledge about the research subject that surfaced during the document study, preliminary research, questionnaire pilot, household and school survey, observation and FGD.

The interviews helped to understand Muslims external reality like facts and events, and internal experiences like feelings and meanings about education and their social exclusion. Moreover, it was also helpful in verifying and cross checking, the information collected from household surveys and observation.

#### **1.9.3.3 Focus Group Discussions**

In this research study, 15 Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted in the study area to collect required qualitative information to supplement the individual household and community level data. In the group discussions, 7 to 12 members were included and a pre-structured checklist was utilized. Muslim political and religious leaders, social activists, educationist, schoolteachers, Maulvies, NGO workers and knowledgeable Muslims concerned with their culture and society participated in the FGDs. The focus group participants were selected by applying the snowball-sampling method.

With prior approval from the participants, an FGD was conducted in the community, generally, in the morning time and conducted in schools and Madrasas after school, which took slightly over two hours. From the focus group discussions, the information regarding social inclusion and exclusion situation of Muslims, causes of low educational attainment among the Muslim communities, role and contribution of

Madrasas to educate Muslim children, Muslims perceptions towards mainstream education were collected. All the participants were given equal opportunities to share their views about the subjects. Tea and snacks were offered in the FGD to encourage sharing of experiences and perceptions in a congenial environment without any interruption and disturbance by unnecessary people. However, women were comparatively found to be hesitant than male participants in actively contributing to the discussions.

#### **1.9.3.4 Observations**

Observation, the most important tool for the collection of qualitative data, was applied in the present study. During observation, information regarding Muslim settlement areas, settlement pattern, nature of houses, nature and quality of schools and schooling, daily social and economic activities, distance of a school from a community concerned, teaching learning environment both in government schools and Madrasas, and the availability of facilities such as drinking water, toilets, furniture, playground, teaching materials, and building infrastructure in schools and Madrasas was collected. Likewise, the availability and accessibility of health posts, hospitals, secondary schools, colleges, banks, motor-able roads, electricity and drinking water related information was also collected. An observation guideline was applied to maintain systematic observation.

Observation provided an opportunity to understand the real situation of Muslims in the study area. The experiences gained from the observation were extremely valuable with respect to deepening the knowledge and understanding about the existing dominance of the majority group in the Muslim community and in the school system. In addition, these observations opened ways for entering into the focus group discussions and key informant interviews, which further enhanced knowledge on social inclusion/exclusion of Muslims in the study area.

#### **1.9.3.5 Case Studies**

Case study method was applied mainly to explore the social exclusion of Muslims and its implication on their daily lives in the society. It also explores how Muslims perceived and experienced social inclusion and exclusion in the community.

During the field study, fifteen case studies were collected with the help of a case study guideline. The case study information was collected only from those respondents with whom the household survey was conducted. The case studies were recorded initially in the form of points in the field, and as far as possible on the same day or before attending other cluster, they were re-written without distorting the major issues, stories and narratives of the cases. They were carefully examined, scrutinized and used in the text to support the argument and complement the information.

### **1.9.3.6 Document Study**

For this study, in the initial stage, the various policy documents, political documents, research reports and other relevant documents, were reviewed which provided a basis for the field research.

The study of the political and policy documents mainly focused on the Interim Constitution of Nepal, Three Years Interim Plan, the Education Act and laws, MOES's policy decisions, Education Commissions' reports, educational plans and programs, Mother tongue education policy, reservation policy in education and government jobs, research reports and census reports etc.

Besides the policy documents, relevant documents from MOES, DEO, different research institutions such as CERID, CNAS and SIRF SNV Nepal, NGOs and INGOs, civil society organizations related to the research subjects were located and gathered.

During the analysis of the documents, the focus was on the exclusion issues of Muslims, specifically the political inclusion and exclusion, access to education, their representation in politics, employment, and other decision making institutions of the state. Similarly, their shares in governmental jobs; incidence of poverty and development indices and per capita income were analysed. Additionally, socio-cultural exclusion and the treatment towards them in the constitution and the public sphere, based on their religion, were also analysed. Further, the policy framework of the Government of Nepal related to the inclusion or exclusion of Muslims were also studied and analysed. During this research, the document analysis helped to develop an understanding of the issues related to the research questions and opened ways for wider level of interactions and national debates on social inclusion/exclusion issues of Muslims in relation to education in Nepal.

#### **1.9.4 Pilot Test and Validation of Research Tools**

Based on the insights and information drawn from the preliminary study as well as from the document and literature review, questionnaires were developed for household survey and interview guidelines for FGD, focus group discussions, key informant interview, and case studies for the field study. Prior to conducting the survey, a pilot test was conducted for 3 days in Jaispur VDC of Banke district. A number of wording in questions were re-arranged and irrelevant items were dropped following the pilot test.

During fieldwork, Nepali language was employed for interviews with respondents. In some cases the respondents were unable to answer the questions properly due to Nepali language so local field assistance was required in order to assist with recording their responses. The questionnaires were prepared and finalized in Nepali language and later translated into English.

The experiences gained during the questionnaire pilot and lessons learned from this were extremely useful in fine-tuning the research methods and improving the questionnaires in a logical and systematic manner. The pilot test also provided insight about the total time required for the household survey to be filled out and the length of time for key informant interviews and FGDs

#### **1.9.5 Data Analysis**

The data and information collected from the field as well as from various other sources was analyzed in a logical and systematic manner.

The primary and secondary field data were processed and analyzed in relation to the objectives and scope of the study. Field data were categorized in different groups as per the nature of data and information. All categorized data under different headings was compiled, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted in a descriptive way. The household survey data were analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel. Similarly, simple statistical tools such as mean, range, and percentage were used for the analysis of quantitative data whereas descriptive methods were applied to the analysis of qualitative data.

### **1.9.6 Data Triangulation**

Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from more than two sources. Patton (1990) sees great importance of triangulation in research. He points out that through triangulation or methodological mixes, the quality of research can be enhanced. He also claims that because of triangulation in research, the validity and credibility of findings are ascertained. Yin (1994) argues that because of the multiple sources of evidence, the validity can be addressed.

In the first phase of this research, a document study and survey research were employed. This was followed by observation, FGDs, case studies, and in-depth interviews within the framework of triangulation. On one hand, the data and information gathered from multiple sources and multiple methods compensated for inadequacies in research methods and approaches while on the other hand, triangulation provided a basis for verifying information to ensure validity and credibility in the research.

### **1.9.7 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues were critical in this research. Highlighting the centrality of ethics in research, Kvale (1996) emphasizes that an interview inquiry is a moral enterprise. He holds that the personal interactions in the interview affect the interviewee, and the knowledge produced by the interview affects our understanding of human situations. I feel that my interactions with the informants during the field survey, FGD and interview influenced the informants. At the same time, my perceptions were changed because of the effects of the informants on me. Thus, it is possible that during the study, there could be an impact on both sides.

Regarding the importance of ethical consideration during the research data collection process, Taylor and Bogdan (1998) state that getting into a setting usually involves some sort of bargain in terms of explicit or implicit assurances that you will not violate informants' privacy or confidentiality, expose them to harm, or interfere in their activities. Once you are in the field, you try to establish rapport with informants, to gain a certain level of trust and openness, and to be accepted as a nonjudgmental and non-threatening person.

All the research methods, procedures, observations, and perspectives embodied and adhered to an ethical standard of conduct. As a researcher, it was important to reassure my respondents that their privacy or confidentiality would not be violated by changing their names and not exposing any information that would be considered distasteful, illegal, and immoral. Research ethics is often much more about institutional and professional regulations and codes of conduct (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Additionally, permission was sought from the sample population to conduct research in their area about them and prior notification/information about my research were given to the sample population (in particularly to key informants, FGDs, respondents), and prior consent of the interviewees was acquired.

Considering the importance of maintaining and continuously following these ethical issues, it was necessary to carefully maintain the presentation of data and results to represent their views as truthfully as possible.

For the study, questions that were more acceptable to the Muslim communities were prepared. It was necessary to be conscious about the dress-up, food, language as well as behavior in the field. Before taking interviews, the objectives of the research were carefully explained and an assurance was provided, that the information would be solely and exclusively utilized for these research purposes only.

In order to conduct interviews, consent from the informants was taken including Muslim leaders, Molvies, school head teachers and parents prior to interviewing them. In order to ensure the confidentiality in the research, private data identifying the subjects were not reported. Attention was paid to the protection of subjects' privacy by using pseudo names of individuals. While carrying out the research it was crucial to be aware of the risk of potential harmful consequences to the informants. During the research, once trust and a rapport was established with the Muslims in the community, they actively participated in my study.

Respect was paid to all the research respondents, participants of FGDs and key informants while recording their views and none of the recorded information was not manipulated nor were they criticized in any way. The intention was for the welfare of the community and the desire was for participants to benefit from this research and the findings rather than creating any possible risk to the community through this study.



### **1.9.8 Challenges and Limitations of the Study**

This study attempts to explore the role of education in social inclusion of Muslims in Nepal, which is the most sensitive and important research in the present context of Nepal. It was not easy to conduct such type of research in the Muslim community due to the political turmoil in the country, religious orthodoxy and lack of education among the Muslims. Several challenges were faced during the course of this study. First, it was difficult to convince the Muslim respondents about the study's purpose and efficacy. Many were very suspicious of the study and some mocked it, convinced that this kind of research is not going to make any impact to say the least. Respondents were not highly enthusiastic and instead were pessimistic about any outcome much less any help coming to them from government agencies.

Another major challenge was the availability of reliable data or reports on the socio-economic and educational conditions of Muslims in general, particularly with regard to the districts in Banke of Nepal and Rupediya in Uttar Pradesh of India. However, comprehensive literature reviews of the works, which do exist, were incorporated in the research. Various surveys as well as government reports have shown that, in Nepal, Muslims are among the most socially, economically, and educationally deprived communities under the categorization of religious minorities. Yet, little has been written on the social exclusion and inclusion situation, their social, economic, educational conditions, and other problems of Nepalese Muslims.

Besides this, the study had some limitations in relation to its scope and methodology. The major limitations of this study were as follows:

- The household survey and in-depth field study was conducted only in Banke district of Nepal and Bahraich district of India. However, Janakpur, Saptari, Rautahat and Kapilbastu districts were also visited for further information.
- The Muslims from the far-western development region and mountain region were not included in the study due to their low (less than 1000) population representation in the regions.
- The information for household surveys was limited to information from sample households of districts.

- The responses from Muslim females could not be collected adequately because of their religious and cultural constraints.
- The extents of political, economic and socio-cultural exclusion were mainly analyzed with the help of secondary information such as information in related literature. In depth, field survey were conducted to find out the real situation of Muslims and to cross validate the information.
- The study was mainly limited to analyze the causes behind minimal access of Muslims to mainstream education. These causes were also analyzed based on theories of majority-minority relations, monopoly, social closure, cultural capital and structure and agency theory.
- In order to compare socio-economic and educational conditions between Nepalese and Indian Muslims, the main socio-demographic indicators (age and sex composition, religion, mother tongue, marital status), economic (occupation, land holding, income and expenditure) and educational (literacy rate, educational attainment, flow of children in different education system, access to educational institutions etc.) were measured and compared.
- Field information was analyzed in a descriptive and analytical manner and presented as the real status of Muslims in Nepal.

### **1.10 Organization of the Study**

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction in which the background of the study, importance of education in human life, history of the development of education, educational situation of Muslims, situation of Muslims and excluded groups in Nepal, the significance of the study, a statement of the problem, objectives, conceptual framework, research methodology, ethical considerations and limitations of the study are presented.

The second chapter presents a review of literature relating to the topic. In this chapter, the definitions and theories of social inclusion and exclusion, the education from a sociological perspective, sociological theory of religion, majority-minority relation theory, an overview of majority policies to overcome minority problems, social inclusion and exclusion debate in Nepal, the government policy and plans for social

Inclusion, international laws, rights and instruments in relation to education, overall education policies and particularly minority and MLE-related education policies in Nepal and previous studies on socio-economic and educational status of Muslims in Nepal are presented.

The third chapter is the introduction of Muslims in Nepal. It covers a brief introduction of Nepal, the migration history, socio-economic, cultural, political and educational condition of Muslims in Nepal.

The fourth chapter is about the data analysis and presentation of the study. It describes a brief introduction of the study area in both Nepal and India, socio-economic status of Muslims, access to education and other resources, participation in the social, political, and economic and other development activities. The chapter also deals with the role of Madrasa to educate Muslims in Nepal and finally analyzes the comparison of Muslims of Nepal and India in terms of their socio-economic and educational condition.

The fifth chapter presents the conclusion, implications and recommendations of the study.

## **Conclusion**

Nepal's geography, ethnic composition and social structure reveal its diversity, pluralism and multilingualism. The geography, education, religion, language, and social structure have contributed to create social inequality, marginalization and exclusion in the society. Economically, Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. Poverty, illiteracy, social inequality and discrimination are a prevalent phenomenon in Nepali society.

Education is one of the basic indicators of the level of human development and essential for the progress of society and development of the nation. In this modern era, education is regarded as a fundamental right of all people, an investment for economic, social and political advancement, a tool for empowerment of disadvantaged groups, a route to the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and mental development of the individual, a foundation for a culture of peace, and an avenue for developing a lifelong learning society. Hence, improving access, equity, relevance and quality of education have become the focus of education in the twenty-first century.

In Nepal, there is a noticeable educational disparity among and between the high castes and other minority groups. Muslims are educationally highly disadvantaged group. They have been excluded from the formal schooling for centuries and not given an opportunity to capitalize on education or use education to transform their knowledge into cultural capital. Before 1940, Muslims were not allowed to attend any Nepali schools. Later on, they were allowed to attend the school but their educational condition is still not satisfactory.

During the 104 years of totalitarian oligarchy rule of Rana (1848-1951), only the family members and their loyal supporters were entitled to socio-economic opportunities and power that further strengthened the social exclusion in Nepal. The first *Muluki Ain* (Country Code) 1854, which upheld strict implementation of the caste system based on the Hindu social code, categorized Muslims as an impure and untouchable group. As a result, they were restricted and discriminated to the extent that only 'raw and dry eatables' were acceptable from their hands.

Even after the major political change in 1951, the political power was upheld by the limited caste and ethnic groups (hill Brahman, Chhetries and Newars) whereas the situation of Muslims remained almost the same due to their very limited access to education, politics and other spheres of power within society. Highly skewed power structures tended to protect the interests of the politically influential and specific privileged caste or ethnic groups, often to the detriment of minority groups. This made society inefficient since the excluded groups were not able to capitalize on their energy, talent and potential.

In Nepal, the real progress of education development begun only after the dawn of democracy in 1951. After the restoration of democracy, various attempts were made to move educational programs forward and make them comprehensive in a planned way aligned with democratic norms and values based on the demands of time and public aspirations.

The government of Nepal has made some efforts to educate the Muslim children. MOES has included Muslims as a special focus group and has developed special policies and programs to increase access of this group to mainstream education. All policies and programs have been developed in line with the EFA. Various high-level

education commissions have been formed and different national educational plans, policies, programs and projects have been introduced since the 1970s.

Despite these efforts, the literacy rate of Muslims lags behind national literacy and that of other high caste groups. Muslims in Nepal are a closed community. A closed community is characterized by a tightly knit internal structure that attempts by various means to shut off influences from the outside world. Due to their distinct religious differences with Hindus, Muslims of Nepal may have turned out into a closed community. Therefore, their low enrollment in mainstream education may be problem of self-exclusion instead of active exclusion of the Nepalese society.

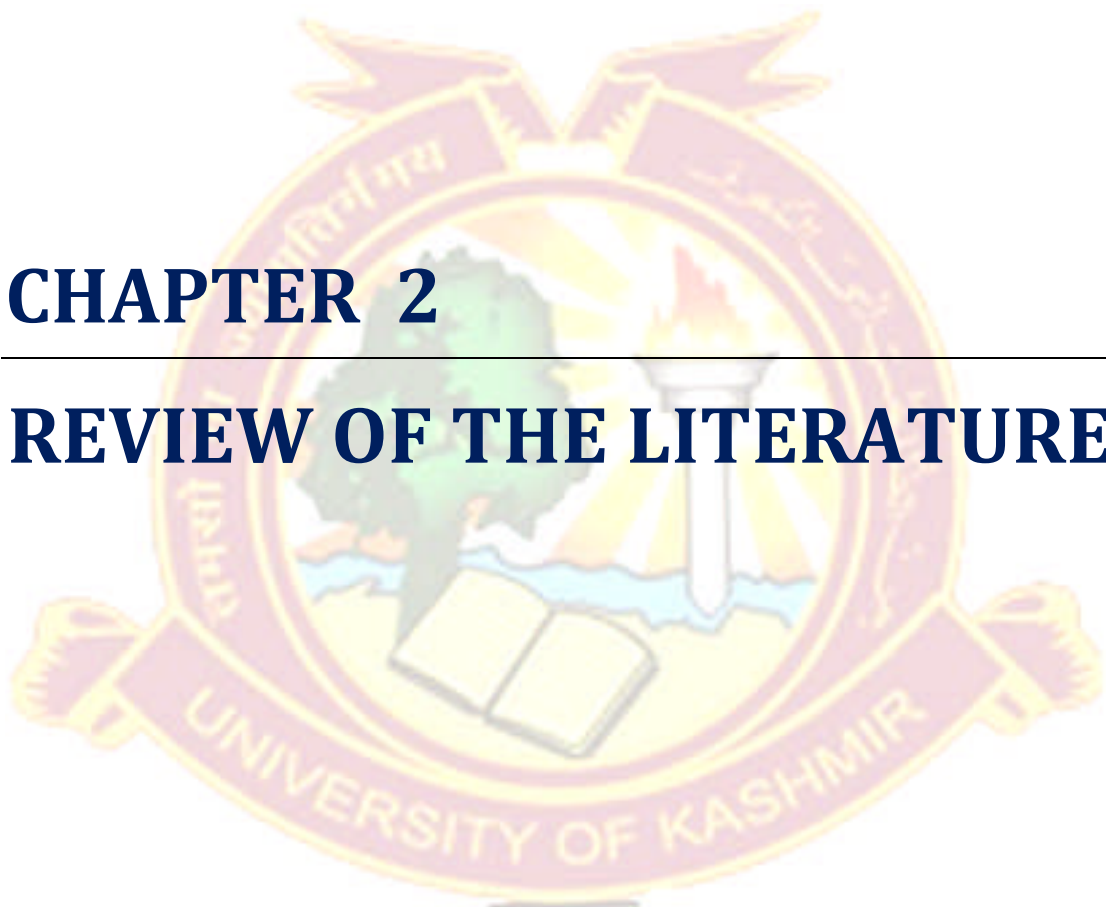
Given all these disparities and the diversity of cultures and languages in the country, the centralized management of education and uniform curriculum are major problems. Therefore, there is a need for strong political commitment and effective strategies in education for social inclusion of minority groups and to create a curriculum framework that embraces cultural diversity of the nation as strength and as an opportunity for enriching the educational experience of all Nepalese children.

To achieve the national educational goals and to improve Muslim inclusion, remarkably extensive efforts have to be made which could reduce educational disparities, social inequality, disparities of power and privilege among different social groups. It is equally important to mobilize the human resources as important social capital for the development of the excluded groups, particularly for the Muslim community.

## **CHAPTER 2**

---

# **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**



This chapter deals with the sociological theories of education, religion and social inclusion and exclusion. The chapter reviews the theories regarding social exclusion and inclusion, social exclusion and inclusion discourse in Nepal, the international laws, rights and instruments in relation to education, the constitutional rights and government policies for the minority rights and education and previous studies on socio-economic and educational status of Muslims in Nepal.

A researcher has developed one's ideas about the research through literature review. The main objective of the literature review is to gain familiarity with the subject matter, to get enough knowledge to develop a conceptual framework, to validate the concepts, and to adopt appropriate research methods.

## **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Social exclusion and inclusion is a multidimensional concept. There are different theoretical perspectives with which to see social exclusion and inclusion as well as inequality, stratification, discrimination and marginalization of individuals or groups in a society. The current section reviews the theories of social exclusion.

### **2.1.1 Concept and Definition of Social Exclusion**

The concept of social exclusion was used for the first time in France during the 1970's with an aim to address the mentally and physically handicapped, aged invalids, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, multi-problem households, marginalized, asocial persons, suicidal people and other social misfits. The European Union later adopted the concept in the late 1980s as a key concept in social policy that in many instances replaced the concept of poverty as a cause of general alienation.

Literally, exclusion means a deliberate act of omission or the act of forcing out someone or something. The concept of social exclusion, initially developed in Europe now increasingly applies to developing countries of the world. While the precise definition varies, it is generally understood as the exclusion of a group or groups of members from social, political and economic institutions. Various scholars and authors have presented their own depictions on social exclusion.

Social exclusion has been defined as a process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society within which they live (European Foundation, 1995, quoted in de Haan, 1998, cited in Francis, 1997).

According to Power and Wilson (2000) social exclusion is a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live. Social exclusion, as defined by Beal and Piron, 2005, is a process and a state that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic and political life and from asserting their rights. It derives from exclusionary relationships based on power.

Sociologically, this term is defined as the outcome of multiple deprivations that prevent individuals or groups from participating fully in the economic, social, and political life of the society in which they live.

Social exclusion is also described as a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status and migrant status. Discrimination occurs in public institutions, such as the legal system or education and health services, as well as social institutions like the household (DFID, 2005).

These definitions show some groups of people in every society are more or less under social exclusion. However, the groups affected and the degree of discrimination varies from one society to another, as do the forms that social exclusion takes. Discrimination



can be open and deliberate, unofficial, or subtle and unintended. It can be based on who you are, and on where you live.

### **2.1.2 Social Exclusion and Capability Deprivation**

Sen (1997) examined social exclusion as a consequence of poverty and capability deprivation. He scrutinized the nature, relevance, and reaches of the idea of social exclusion and connected the notions to the idea of relates in a reasonably closed way. By examining the possibility of using this idea in the context of other than the European conditions, Sen viewed that excluding from common facilities or benefits that others have can certainly be a significant handicap that impoverishes the life that individuals can enjoy. To him, the nature of poverty analysis substantial benefits from the insights provided by the perspective of social exclusion. The perspective of social exclusion reinforces rather than competes with the understanding of poverty as a means of capability deprivation.

He differentiated between exclusion in terms of constitutive relevance (or intrinsic importance) and the instrumental importance or consequences as two ways in which social exclusion can lead to capability deprivation. According to Sen, there is an explicit or an implicit preoccupation with social cohesion and integration and fear of social disintegration due to social exclusion or lack of participation in the life of the community. He argued that social exclusion, usually considered as a group and not an individual phenomenon, is usually based on social identity of race, religion, culture, nationality, ethnicity and caste.

### **2.1.3 Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity**

Silver (1994) in her article Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity: Three Paradigms traced the evolution of the exclusion in France, from where these two terms are said to have emerged. Silver writes that the term social exclusion is so evocative, ambiguous, multidimensional and expansive that it can be defined in many ways. This concept is often conflated with the poverty and inequality, discrimination and the underclass, Moreover, the answer to the question can generate multiple responses.

Silver defined these terms indicating numerous connotations, and distinguished three paradigms within which social exclusion is embedded namely, solidarity, specialization, and monopoly.

**Solidarity:** The social order is conceived as external moral and normative way rather than grounded in individual group or class interests (Rousseau and Durkheimian cited in Silver, 1994: 541). This paradigm draws heavily on anthropology, sociology, cultural studies and focuses on the exclusion inherent in the solidarity of a nation, race, ethnicity, locality, and other cultural or pre-modalities that delimit boundaries between groups.

**Specialization:** Individuals differ, giving rise to specialization in the market and in social groups. Exclusion is often a consequence of unenforced rights and market failure. The focus here is on exclusion of individuals and not groups (Methodological Individualism) (Pradhan, 2006).

**Monopoly:** It is a stage of exclusion because of the formation of group monopoly. As per this paradigm, powerful groups restrict the access of outsiders to valued resources through social closure. Unlike in the specialization paradigm, group distinction and inequality overlap in the monopoly paradigm.

Silver has further presented several remarks on these three paradigms. First, these paradigms are of an ideal type. In reality, social exclusion is defined by different societies and cultures in different ways through time. For instance, it can sometimes include, the discussion of migrants and refugees, exclusion from the labor market and unemployment, in the relation to policy making, in the form of the function of the welfare state, passivity towards a group, homelessness, child labor and inner-city crisis etc. Second, these paradigms conceive exclusion as a social relationship between included and excluded. Third, exclusion can be viewed at macro or micro levels. For example, at a macro level, it can be viewed as the consequence of policy and at the micro level; it can be viewed as the consequence of unemployment. Fourth, these paradigms of social exclusion address more than one dimension or aspect of social exclusion, (i.e. economic, sociological, interactional, cultural and political). Fifth, social exclusion is the formation of group monopoly. Powerful groups, often with

distinctive cultural identities and institutions, restrict the access of outsiders to valued resources through a process of social closer.

According to Silver, exclusion arises from the interplay of class, status, and political power and serves the interests of the included. She further discussed the economic dimension of these three paradigms and questioned the significance of exclusion in politics and social policy. She is of the opinion that exclusion discourse moves away from political expressions of class conflict towards the struggles of the urban masses and social movements (Silver, 1994).

#### **2.1.4 Social Exclusion, Poverty and Inequality**

Silver (1994) and Williams (1985) stressed that poverty and inequality have become the accepted concepts in social science, which is more accurate to consider the term exclusion as a keyword in French Republican discourse. Exclusion is conceived not simply as an economic or political phenomenon but as a deficiency of solidarity, a break in the social fabric.

Ortner (1995) identified some of the forms of ethnographic refusal and its consequences including the reasons. Talking about resistance and domination, Ortner says domination is a relatively fixed and institutionalized form of power; resistance is essentially organized opposition to power institutionalized in this way ethnographic thinness in turn derives from several sources.

#### **2.1.5 Social Exclusion, Culture and Democracy**

Escobar (1997) highlighted the cultural politics of nature. According to him, the most natural form of nature left on earth, is a concept of the world inhabited by the most natural people (indigenous peoples) possessing the most natural knowledge of saving nature (indigenous knowledge). People have rights to cultural identity, territorial space, political economy, to construct their own vision of society and solidarity. To him, identity has double meaning and it is based on the difference.

de Haan (1999) defined social exclusion as a multidimensional process. According to him, excluded people or groups face multiple disadvantages. He discussed whether the

concept of social exclusion brings anything new to debates about deprivation in developing countries. The paper focused at the multi-dimensional character of deprivation including the processes, mechanisms and institutions that exclude people. It is not a static description of a situation of deprivation and focuses on the causes and mechanism that lead to the situation. According to him, social exclusion is the opposite of social integration, which reflects the perceived importance of being part of a society, being integrated. Since, it is a multidimensional concept; it refers to exclusion in the economic, social and political sphere. It goes beyond the resource allocation mechanism and includes power relations, agency, culture and social identity. Social exclusion can be referred to a state or situation but it is also often referred to as the processes and the mechanism by which people are excluded. The focus is on the institutions that enable and constrain human interaction.

Young (1999) analyzed exclusion from the perspective of political science, especially from the perspective of democracy. In his view, there are two models of democracy namely the aggregative model and deliberative model. Both are common in the question of rule of law, voting as a means of decision making when consensus is not possible or too costly to achieve, freedom of speech, assembly, association and so on. However, these models differ in many extents. Aggregative model interprets democracy as the preference of citizens in choosing public officials and policies. The goal of democratic decision-making is to decide what leaders, rules and policies appropriately correspond to the most widely and strongly hold preferences. A well-functioning democracy allows for the expression of and competition among preferences and has reliable and fair methods for adding them to bring a result.

Young has presented some bases for the supremacy of the deliberative model in terms of the aggregate model for fostering social inclusion. These bases are:

**Inclusion:** In this model, a democratic decision is normatively legitimate only if all those affected by it are included in the process of discussion and decision-making.

**Political Equality:** As a normative ideal, democracy means political equality. As per this model, all those affected by the state policy should be included in the decision-

making process and included equally in all terms so that all have an equal right and effective opportunity to express their interest and concerns.

**Reasonableness:** Reasonable people enter a discussion to solve collective problems with the aim of reaching a conclusion. They understand that discourse often produces insight. In addition, the decisions and agreements should be open to new challenges. Actually, reaching consensus is not a requirement of deliberative reasoning; participants in the discussion may not even be aiming to reach agreement prior to entering the discussion.

**Publicity:** The condition of inclusion, equality and reasonableness finally entails that the interaction among participants in a democratic decision-making process, which forms a public sphere in the people, holds accountability. Public consists of a plurality of different individuals and collective experiences, histories, commitments, ideas, interest and goals that makes one another eager to discuss collective problems under a common set of procedures.

Young (2000) attempted to find out the norms and conditions of inclusive democratic communication under the circumstances of structural inequality and cultural difference. He studied how inclusive democratic communication and decision-making should be theorized for societies with millions of people. Furthermore, his concentration was on the proper scope of the democratic policy and the way exclusions are enacted by the restriction of the scope. Young concludes that active participation and political representation do not exclude one another, and sometimes-even work together to produce policy outcomes. Inclusion and democracy explore additional and deeper conditions of political inclusion and exclusion, such as those involving modes of communication, attending to social difference, representation, civic organizing and the borders of political jurisdictions. To Young, the model of deliberative democracy implies a strong meaning of inclusion and political equality.

Democracy is not only a means through which citizens can promote their interests and hold the power of rulers in check. Democratic politics entail a rule of law, promotion of civil and political liberties, and free and fair elections of lawmakers. Democracy is not an all or nothing affair but a matter of degree; societies can vary in both the extent and

the intensity of their commitment to democratic practice. A questionable assumption made by some democratic theorists is that a properly functioning democratic discussion should be oriented to a common good or a common interest. Inclusion and democracy articulates and defends principles that are the best-expressed ideals of democratic politics in which citizens rightly try to solve the shared problems.

Kabeer (2000) analyzed social exclusion as the product of institutional process, group dynamics, and social practices. She said the distinction made between economic and cultural disadvantage is heuristic rather than real, since the two tend to be interrelated. The increasing nature of different forms of exclusion and inclusion results in segmentation of society, and in clusters of advantage and disadvantage, rather than a simple dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion. Institutions embody different patterns of rules norms and asset distributions, which together help to spell out people's membership in different kinds of social groups, shape their identities and define their interests.

Finally, he concludes that a social exclusion perspective opens up a larger and more complex domain of disadvantages for policy makers to grapple with than does the conventional focus on poverty. He showed the distinction between 'affirmative' and 'transformative' remedies for injustice.

Kabeer (2005) further analyzed citizenship rights for causing social exclusion of an individual. According to her, the classical liberal theory claims that all human beings have rights by virtue of their humanity, which are consequently universal. However, universal and individual rights are contested by many other views. Cultural relativism challenges the claims of Universalism. As per this claim, the view gives more importance to individuals than societies. Another view claims that rights of groups are relevant yet priority must be given over to individual rights. The third view claims that economic, social and cultural rights are more important to the poor and marginalized than political and civic rights. The fourth set of criticism is around the debate between rights and duties.

She suggested four bases of inclusion:

- **Justice:** Justice means treating people as same and different according to the context. The excluded should be treated without any type of discrimination considering their nature of marginalization and exclusion.
- **Recognition:** There should be recognition of the intrinsic worth of all human beings with respect to their differences.
- **Self-determination:** People should have some degree of control over their lives and their decision making.
- **Solidarity:** It is the capacity to identify others and to act in unity with them in the claim of justice and recognition.

Taylor (1999) explored the dynamics of exclusion. Democracy, he says, is inclusive but paradoxically, it is also the reason that democracy tends towards exclusion. The exclusion is a by-product of the need in self-governing societies and a high degree of cohesion. Democratic states need something like a common identity. To form a state in a democratic era, a society is forced to undertake the difficult and never to be completed task of defining its collective identity. On a more philosophical level, because what is important about each person is what they share with everyone else namely their power to choose their own ends, directs their own lives and their autonomy.

### 2.1.6 Social Exclusion and Pro/Anti Culturalism

Eller (1997) substituted multiculturalism for cultural relativism with the notion anti-multiculturalism position, a discourse based on a further insight. The problem as a 'centering' of intellectual and cultural attention on the European while the rest of us are pushed to the periphery, occupying the restricted category of other (Reagan, 1993, cited in Pradhan, 2007). The 'elitist' categorization of culture either leaves out the contributions of others or marginalizes them as folk traditions or mythology or otherwise. Multiculturalists tend to issue two warnings. The first is that knowledge; value and culture are political and perceptual and must be treated as such. The second

warning follows from the first: if knowledge, value and culture are ultimately settled by negotiation or contestation, anti-multiculturalists fear that the claims and proposals of multiculturalism threaten a 'disuniting of America' (Schlesinger, 1992). He concludes that the best reason to reject anti-multiculturalism is that it short changes knowledge by failing to see its beliefs, truths, values and perspectives.

Kymlicka and Baogang (2005) have explored the varied and contradictory ways that issues of ethnocultural diversity are conceptualized and debated in South and East Asia. They attempted to find out the range of theoretical perspectives that shaped the debate over multiculturalism in the region. They identified the legacies of pre-colonial and colonial traditions for managing diversity. Their main finding was that political actors draw on a range of intellectual resources and traditions when thinking through questions, which was an appeal to international human rights instruments. Western policies of multiculturalism are interspersed with appeals to local traditions, national mythologies, regional practices, and religious doctrines.

The mutual compatibility of the differences is contested, leading to an ongoing process of mutual adjustment and mutual influence. The different influences all play a role; their influence varies from country to country and from actor to actor within each country. They concluded that talking about 'patterns' and 'trajectories' is heavily stylized, and gives a misleading impression of solidarity and predictability. Asian countries, however, have been surprisingly absent from this global debate. There is no escaping the Internationalization of minority rights debates.

Studying social exclusion means to see the gender relation as well. Many scholars in the ongoing era are concerned over relating gender to the exclusion and inclusion discourse. Jackson (1999) has explored the gender implications of some of the core elements of social exclusion paradigms. To him, social exclusion is a negative state or process; in both cases, this entails going beyond resource allocation mechanisms, and including power relations, agency, culture and social identity. Gender operates within social categories rather than constructing bonded groups of men and women that marginality offers grounds for resistance and resource claims, and that gendered subjects experience simultaneous exclusion and inclusion.



The terminology of exclusion and inclusion has a problematic dualism at its heart, and although there is a complex hierarchy of interrelated inclusion and exclusion, each turn into an insider/outsider distinction (Gore, 1995). The gender difference is an issue of social recognition and valuation, and not simply a social problem. Gender-based exclusions from access to resources have been the focus of considerable research into gender poverty in the south; in particular, exclusions from land rights and common property resources, employment opportunities and income control knowledge and information.

Figueroa et al. (1995) has mentioned three dimensions of social exclusion— political, economic and cultural exclusion. Economic exclusion is the exclusion from market exchange while political exclusion is exclusion from citizenship rights and exclusion from cultural process that make individual's exclusion from participation in social network.

Stewart (2000) focused on critical theory and perceives social exclusion as a product of globalization and free market economy in a market driven society. He analyzed the causes, characteristics and possible remedies for social inclusion based on critical theory. He identified many questions regarding social inclusion and exclusion such as context, which is related to the question of social exclusion proposed to be generated such as globalization. He proposed three ways to overcome the problem of social exclusion such as RED (Redistribution Discourse) which is related to the discourse of historical origin of poverty, which has been broadened by socially generated inequalities of power and resources. The second way is moral underclass discourse (MUD) which identifies the causes of social exclusion with the moral and cultural characteristics of those who are excluded. It demands a powerful political project to solve the problem. The third and last way is social integrationist discourse (SID) which prioritizes economic efficiency and social cohesion and links the two by consistent emphasis upon the integrative function of paid work.

A review of the concepts of social exclusion clearly indicates different ideas of what constitutes social inclusion and exclusion. The concepts and definitions vary both in academia and in development policies. For instance, some analysts see social exclusion

as a cause of poverty, others suggest that it is both an expression and a determinant, of poverty and most would probably agree that poverty is a form of social exclusion. Although originally defined in terms of the rupture of social bonds, and applied to social disintegration rather than poverty, social exclusion has developed in a range of paradigmatic styles in different political and intellectual contexts. In development discourse, social exclusion is discussed predominantly in terms of its relationship to poverty (Silver, 1995, cited in Jackson, 1999).

Inclusion and exclusion, furthermore, are inseparable sides of the same coin: the strength of intra-group ties and of the identity that forges them is inseparable from a community's definition of itself as distinctive. Moreover, if inclusion implies, as it may, incorporation into exploitative or violent relationships, exclusion may not always be a bad thing (Francis, 2000).

Given these variations on the conception of exclusion, Francis (2000) contends that the notion of social exclusion, while carrying a number of pointers for a broader and less income-focused conception of generation, is not a very precise or a nuanced one.

In conclusion, it is widely acknowledged that social exclusion is a contested term that defies easy definition. There have been numerous attempts to define social exclusion, each one having a slightly different emphasis, and each one underpinned by slightly different philosophical perspectives. This conceptual confusion stems from social exclusion being primarily a political term, originating in the social policy discussions of the European Commission in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Burchardt (2000) it served as a more neutral term than poverty for discussing the problems posed and faced by those at the bottom of the social order. It may be a feature of social exclusion (its vagueness, with its multiple meanings and connotations) that makes it so useful in the world of politics. However, greater precision is needed to document and understand its role in social experience.

Is social exclusion in any way distinct from other related concepts, such as poverty or social capital? There are clear overlaps, and the inclusion by Townsend (1979) of lack of participation in certain activities in his definition of relative deprivation blurs the boundary between poverty and social exclusion. Many subsequent researchers have

more or less conflated the two concepts. However, exclusion from participation in particular aspects of society does not always stem from material disadvantage. Social exclusion is a broader concept than poverty. The concept of social capital focuses attention on the value that could derive from social contacts and networks, and the trust and reciprocity that inhere within them. As such, it overlaps with a central component of social exclusion: participation in social networks. Once again, social exclusion is arguably a broader concept, with limited social capital being one potential cause of such exclusion.

## **2.2 Education from Sociological Perspective**

Education is the one of the main social institutions of the society that plays vital role in the socialization of children, transformation of knowledge from generation to generations and enhancement of the capability of people in society for their quality of life. Education is a means of overcoming handicaps, achieving greater equality and acquiring wealth and social status (Sargent, 1994). Education is perceived as a place where children can develop according to their unique needs and potential and perceived as one of the best means of achieving greater social equality. A systematic sociology of education began with Emile Durkheim's work on moral education.

To study the problems regarding social exclusion and inclusion of a particular social group is a problem related to sociological analysis. For the better understanding of social exclusion of certain minority groups, the study must be based on sociological theories for an in-depth understanding of social processes, which affects the relationship between minority and majority groups of a community and ultimately causes the social exclusion of that group.

### **2.2.1 Structural Functionalism**

This theory believes that society leans towards equilibrium and social order. Society, as per this theory, is like a human body, in which institutions such as education are like important organs that keep the society/body healthy and well (Bessant & Watts, 2002).

Social health means the same as social order, and is guaranteed when nearly everyone accepts the general moral values of their society. Hence, structural functionalists

believe the aim of key institutions, such as education, is to socialize children and teenagers. Socialization is the process by which the new generation learns the social norms and values that they need as productive citizens. Although this aim is stated in the formal curriculum, it is mainly achieved through the hidden curriculum, a subtler, but nonetheless powerful, introduction of the norms and values of the wider society (Harper, 1997).

Students learn these values because their behavior at school is regulated until they gradually internalize and accept them. Education must, however perform another function. As various jobs become vacant, they must be filled with the appropriate people. Therefore, the other purpose of education is to sort and rank individuals for placement in the labor market (Munro, 1997). Those with high achievement will be trained for the most important jobs and in reward, be given the highest incomes. Those who achieve the least, will be given the least demanding jobs, and hence the least income.

A large numbers of capable students from working class or backgrounds fail to achieve satisfactory standards in school and therefore fail to obtain the status they deserve (Meighan & Siraj-Blatchford, 1997). Jacob believes this is because the middle class cultural experiences that are provided at school may be contrary to the experiences working-class children receive at home.

### **2.2.2 Education and Social Reproduction**

The perspective of conflict theory, contrary to the structural functionalist perspective, believes that society is full of vying social groups with different aspirations, different access to life chances and gain different social rewards (Furze & Healy, 1997). According to this perspective, relations in society are mainly based on exploitation, oppression, domination and subordination.

Many teachers assume that students will have particular middle class experiences at home, and for some children this assumption is not necessarily true. Some children are expected to help their parents after school and carry considerable domestic responsibilities in their often single-parent home. The demands of this domestic labor

often make it difficult for them to find time to do all their homework and thus affect their academic performance.

Where teachers have softened the formality of regular study and integrated students have preferred working methods into the curriculum, they noted that particular students displayed strengths they had not been aware of before. However, few teachers deviate from the traditional curriculum and the curriculum conveys what constitutes knowledge as determined by the state and those in power. This knowledge is not very meaningful to many of the students, who see it as pointless. The students realize there is little or no direct link between the subjects they are doing and their perceived future in the labor market. Anti-school values displayed by these children often derive from their consciousness of their real interests (Wilson & Wyn, 1987).

Conflict theorists believe this social reproduction continues to occur because the whole education system is overlain with ideology provided by the dominant group. In effect, they perpetuate the myth that education is available to all to provide a means of achieving wealth and status. Anyone who fails to achieve this goal, according to the myth, has only himself or herself to blame. The duplicity is so successful that many parents endure appalling jobs for many years, believing that this sacrifice will enable their children to have opportunities in life that they did not have themselves. Those people who are poor and disadvantaged are victims of a societal confidence trick. They have been encouraged to believe that a major goal of schooling is to strengthen equality while, in reality, schools reflect society's intention to maintain the previous unequal distribution of status and power.

### **2.2.3 Structure and Agency: Bourdieu and Cultural Capital**

Pierre Bourdieu has significantly theorized theory of social reproduction. However, Bourdieu as a social theorist has always been concerned with the dichotomy between the objective and subjective, or to put it another way, between structure and agency. Bourdieu has, therefore, built his theoretical framework around the important concepts of habitus, field and cultural capital. These concepts are based on the idea that objective structures determine the individuals' chances, through the mechanism of the habitus, where individuals internalize these structures. However, the habitus is also formed by,

for example, an individual's position in various fields, their family and their everyday experiences. Therefore, one's class position does not determine one's life chances, although it does play an important part, alongside other factors.

Bourdieu used the idea of cultural capital to explore the differences in outcomes for students from different classes in the French educational system. He explored the tension between the conservative reproduction and the innovative production of knowledge and experience. He found that the tension is intensified by considerations of which particular cultural past and present is to be conserved and reproduced in schools. Therefore, he argues that it is the culture of the dominant groups, and therefore their cultural capital, which is embodied in schools, and that this leads to social reproduction (Harker, 1990).

The cultural capital of the dominant group, in form of practices and relation to culture, is assumed by the school to be the natural and the only proper type of cultural capital and is therefore legitimated. It demands, uniformly of all its students that they should have, what it does not give (Bourdieu, 2000). This legitimate cultural capital allows students who possess it to gain educational capital in the form of qualifications. Lower-class students, therefore, are disadvantaged. To gain qualifications, they must acquire legitimate cultural capital, by exchanging their own (usually) cultural capital (Harker, 1984). This exchange is not a straightforward one, due to the class ethos of the lower-class students. Class ethos is described as the particular dispositions towards, and subjective expectations of school and culture. Partly, it is determined by the objective chances of that class. This means that not only do children find success harder in school due to the fact that they must learn a new way of being, or relating to the world, and especially, a new way of relating to and using language, but they must also act against their instincts and expectations. The subjective expectations influenced by the objective structures found in the school, perpetuate social reproduction by encouraging less-privileged students to eliminate themselves from the system, so that fewer and fewer are to be found as one journeys through the levels of the system. The process of social reproduction is neither perfect nor complete, yet a small number of less-privileged students achieve success. For the majority of these students who succeed at school, they have had to internalize the values of the dominant classes and use them as their own, to

the detriment of their original habitus and cultural values. Bourdieu's perspective reveals how objective structures play an important role in determining individual achievement in school, but allows for the exercise of an individual's agency to overcome these barriers, although this choice is not without its penalties.

Structuration theory is social analysis, which opposes the objectivism and subjectivism of prevailing theories of social analysis. He has presented this theory in his famous book *The Constitution of Society*. Giddens has surveyed a wide range of theories that begin either with the individual agent or with the subject (for example, symbolic interactionism) or society/structure or object (for example, structural functionalism) and rejected both polar alternatives. Rather he argues that the basic domain of the study of social sciences is neither the experience of an individual actor, nor the existence of any form of social totality, but the social practices ordered across time and space (Giddens, 1997).

On the other hand, Giddens suggests that the interpretative sociologies based on hermeneutical tradition such as phenomenology and ethno-methodology favor humanism, which is strongly opposed by structuralism. Interpretative sociologies believe that there is a wide gap between the human subject and social object. It believes subjectivity as a center of the experience of culture and history that is the foundation of social or human sciences. He further, admits that there lies a material world governed by impersonal relations of cause and effect out of the realm of subjective experiences and different from it. Interpretative sociologists believe that action and meaning are accorded primary in the explication human conduct not on the social structure, whereas structuralism and functionalism give more importance to the constraining qualities of structure.

Giddens views that there are differences between epistemological as well as ontological perspectives. He has explained these differences persisting in the analysis of the relationship between action, meaning and subjectivity and its relationship with structure, constraints, and objectivity. According to him, structuralism and functionalism believe in the imperialism of object, whereas interpretative sociology believes in the imperialism of subject.

The basic domain of study of social sciences, according to the theory of structuration is neither the experience of the individual actor nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across the space and time. Human experiences are recursive, like any self-reproducing items in nature.

He further states that structuration is the structuring of social relation across time and space, in virtue of the duality of structure. The core elements of this theory are structure, system and duality of structure. According to this theory, structure means the rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of a social system. Structure exists only as memory traces on the organic basis of human knowledge and instantiated action.

### **2.3 Sociological Theory of Religion**

Religion is one of the main important social institutions in the society. It provides guidance to its followers for their conduct in every arena of their day-to-day life from the beginning of human civilization.

In sociology, there are mainly three dominant perspectives from which to see society. From the functionalist perspective, religion is an integrative force in society because it has the power to shape collective beliefs. It provides cohesion in the social order by promoting a sense of belonging and collective consciousness.

Emile Durkheim, the founder of functionalism, spent much of his academic career studying religions, especially those of small societies. Durkheim viewed religion within the context of the entire society and acknowledged its place in influencing the thinking and behavior of the members of society. Durkheim (1947) as stated by Schaefer et al. (1992: 415) define that religion as a unified system of belief and practices related to sacred things. Nottingham (1971) defined religion as the integration of three main interrelated systems, which are an intellectual system or system of belief, action system or system of rites and ceremonies and communal system or a system of group or organization. These three systems of religion play both manifest and latent functions for structuring the belief system of a particular religious group of society.



People see religion as contributing to the health and continuation of society in general. Thus, religion functions to unite society's members by prompting them to affirm their common values and beliefs on a regular basis.

Weber viewed religion in terms of how it supports other social institutions. Weber thought that the religious belief systems provided a cultural framework that supported the development of other social institutions, such as the economy. While Durkheim and Weber concentrated on how religion contributes to the cohesion of society, Karl Marx focused on the conflict and oppression that religion provided to societies. Marx saw religion as a tool for class oppression in which it promotes stratification because it supports a hierarchy of people on Earth and the subordination of humankind to divine authority.

Marx takes religion as the 'opium of the people. He views religion as teaching people accept their current lot in life, no matter how bad, while postponing rewards and happiness to some afterlife. Religion, then, prohibits social change by teaching nonresistance to oppression, diverting people's attention away from worldly injustices, justifying inequalities of power and wealth for the privileged and emphasizing rewards yet to come.

Lastly, symbolic interaction theory focuses on the process by which people become religious. Different religious beliefs and practices emerge in different social and historical contexts because context frames the meaning of religious belief. Symbolic interaction theory helps explain how the same religion can be interpreted differently by different groups or in different times throughout history. From this perspective, religious texts are not truths, but have been interpreted by people.

## **2.4 Majority-Minority Relation Theory**

Scholars have defined the term minority in different ways in different situations. Simpson and Yinger (1965) defined minority as a group of people, who because of their physical and cultural characteristics, are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who, therefore, regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination. It excludes the minorities from full

participation in social life. The existence of a minority in a society implies the existence of a corresponding dominant group with higher social status and greater privileges. Minority status develops exclusion from full participation in the life of society.

The term “national minorities” originated in Europe and used to describe the particular social position of some people in relation to social population. Minority status is not necessarily the matter of population of a group. The feeling of minority status of a group arises due to prejudice and discrimination from the dominant group. Metron and Nisbet (1996) have identified the four elements causing the minority position of a group based on race, nationality, religion and language. The minority status of a group is determined by the presence of one or more distinguishable characteristic in a group. However, presence of characteristics, which is quite different from a dominant group, is necessarily not a cause of minority group status. A group is a minority group, if it is the object of prejudice and discrimination from the dominant group and if the members think themselves as a minority.

Elements, which turn a group into minority status, are not only their comparatively lower population, but it is the visible ascribed traits by which most group members of that group can be recognized. They receive differential treatment based on possessing these traits, their organization of self-image around this identity and an awareness or shared identity with others in the same group.

#### **2.4.1 Types of Minority Groups**

There are different types of minority groups in the world. Scholars and writers have classified minority groups in various ways. According to Ogbu (1986) minorities are classified into three types based on their nature and characteristics, autonomous, caste and caste-like, and immigrant minority. The autonomous minorities are those people who have distinct racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural identity, not totally subordinated economically and politically to a dominant group e.g. Muslims of Nepal.

Caste and caste-like minorities are those groups whose social, economic and political role in the society is defined by the dominant groups and reinforced by political and economic subordination. Immigrant minorities are those who have come to a

geographic region due to immigration at various times, such as Asian people in the U.K.

Simpson and Yinger (1965) have classified the minorities into four categories on the basis of their ultimate objectives:

**Pluralistic:** Minority groups have peaceful existence side by side with the majority and other minorities.

**Assimilations:** Groups have a desire for absorption into dominant group.

**Secessionists:** A minority group seeks both cultural and political independence. When a friendly and plural existence or assimilation is frustrated, a minority group may develop a movement dedicated to completely independent existence. They become discontented with cultural pluralism and antagonistic to assimilation. Such movement most often occurs among a minority that once had political independence.

**Militants:** This is the extreme example of secessionism. The group becomes convinced of its own superiority and turns into a violent militant group.

Hess, Markson and Stein (1988) have classified the minorities into three broad categories; Racial, Ethnic and Religious minority. They state that race is based on distribution of biological traits, ethnicity is based on national background and religion is a set of beliefs and rituals associated with sacred objects.

#### **2.4.2 Social Discrimination and Minority Groups**

Muslims in Nepal are considered as a religious minority group. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the effect of minority status of an ethnic group on the different aspects related to their daily life. The minority status of a group is a product of prejudice and discrimination. 'Prejudice' literally means prejudging. The ethnic, racial, religious or other social categories are stereotypes based on many prejudices. A stereotype is an image in which a single set of characteristics, favorable or unfavorable, are attributed to an entire group. It is a learned behavior and generally an institutionalized pattern rather than a personal quirk (Hess et al., 1988).

The prejudice of a dominant group towards a minority group leads to the discrimination of the latter. Discrimination can simply be defined as the majority groups not allowing members of the minority group to have the same or equivalent opportunities equal to them. Discrimination is judged in terms of four general categories; economic, law, politics and social relations (Merton & Nisbet, 1966).

Prejudice and discrimination are not only the cause of blocked opportunity; it is also an effect of the latter. Restriction of socio-economic life chances of minority groups are both the cause and effect of prejudice and discrimination. The continuous prejudice and discrimination, on the absence of controlling mechanism for it, can increase the tension between majority groups, which finally can be turned into inter group violence (Simpson & Yinger, 1965).

## **2.5 Theoretical Perspectives of the Study**

Based on the theories of exclusion, Muslims in Nepal can be considered as an excluded minority group. Since history, they have been excluded from their educational, economic, political and cultural dimensions (Figueroa et al., 1995 & de Haan, 1998). Among the religious groups in Nepal, the Muslims stand out as particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, especially in areas where they are living as minorities in a Hindu cultural environment.

Even today, they have low access to education and decision-making levels of the state. The majority populations of the country treat them as untouchable, the lowest stratum of the Hindu caste hierarchy in the past. As a result, they have been facing multiple disadvantages in the country. According to de Haan (1998), social exclusion goes beyond the resource allocation mechanism and includes power relations, agency, culture and social identity. Social exclusion can refer to a state or situation but often refers to the processes or the mechanism by which people are excluded. The focus is on the institutions that enable and constrain human interactions.

This research intends to study the relationship between formal educational institutions and their exclusion from social, economic and political domains.

Muslims follow Islam. The degree of social integration is very high among Muslims in Nepalese society. Generally, religious beliefs, values and a faith system determine the human culture, way of life and attitudes towards education, educational institutions and teachers. In this study, an attempt is made to find how Islam's faith system has influenced their attitudes towards education (both Madrasas and mainstream) school environment, teachers, curriculum and how they construct their belief systems within the society and how their belief system makes them isolated, closed and excluded communities in the country.

The foremost cause of Muslim exclusion in Nepal is their religion as they are a minority, antithetical to Hinduism, the latter being the state religion until recent past (Hachhethu, 2009). Historically, *Muluki Ain*, 1854 introduced in the country was mainly responsible for the exclusion of Muslims. Muslims were impure in the eyes of the law and therefore they remained alienated from the national mainstream (Hofer, 1979). Nepal remained a Hindu state until its transformation into a secular state in May 2006. The Muslims are minority groups by religion and the languages they speak as their mother tongue.

Theoretically, this study is based on social exclusion and inclusion theories as described in the chapter *Literature Review*. In this section, only the highly relevant theories, which have been presented and summarized, are applied to my study.

Silver (1994) mentioned solidarity, specialization and monopoly as paradigms of social exclusion. Her third paradigm, monopoly, is more relevant in the context of exclusion of Nepalese Muslims. From this perspective, a certain group's monopoly prevails in the society and the dominant group restricts access of outsider (minority groups) to valued resources through social closure.

Majority-minority relation theory helps to see the domination of high-caste Hindu majority groups over Muslims minority groups in Nepal. In society, the feeling of minority status of a group arises due to prejudice and discrimination from the dominant group. Metron and Nisbet (1996) identified the four factors causing the minority position of a group based on race, nationality, religion and language. In Nepal,

Muslims, Madhesis, and indigenous nationalities are minority groups on the basis of their religion, language, culture and representation in state power.

Parkin's theory of social closure is applied to understand the social exclusion of Muslims because of their minority position in society. In sociology, Frank Parkin is best known for his contribution to the theory of social closure. He follows the Max Weber's concept of social closure which states that a dominant group safeguards its position and privileges by monopolizing resources and opportunities for its own group while denying access to outsiders. Parkin (1979) argues that the actions of social groups to maximize their own advantages by restricting access to certain social rewards to their members, and thereby closing access to those rewards to outsiders.

Amartya Sen's capability approach would be more effective to understand the issues of Muslim exclusion with respect to capability deprivation. The capability theory examines social exclusion as a consequence of poverty and capability deprivation. It illustrates how social exclusion is caused by various deprivations, which prevent people from living 'a minimally decent life (Sen, 2000).

Likewise, the Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital (knowledge, skills, and other cultural acquisitions) is equally relevant to a study of the language situation and educational system in schools. According to this perspective, the cultural capital of the dominant group, in the form of practices and relation to culture, is assumed by the school to be the natural and the only proper type of cultural capital and is therefore legitimated. It demands, uniformly of all its students that they should have, what it does not give. The legitimate cultural capital allows students who possess it to gain educational capital in the form of qualifications. Those lower-class students are therefore disadvantaged. To gain qualifications they must acquire legitimate cultural capital, by exchanging their own (usually) cultural capital (Harker, 1984).

Finally, Madrasa education and its importance in the Muslim communities can be seen from the functional perspective of education. Gidden's theory of structuration is also used to analyze the relationship between Muslim experiences and perceptions towards education in general and mainstream education in particular in their social and cultural context over the period of time and space.

## 2.6 An Overview of Majority Policies to Overcome Minority Problems

There is no single universal model to overcome minority problems in the world. Different countries have been using different models to overcome these problems. The existence of a minority group with strong feelings of prejudice and discrimination acts as a powerful disintegrating force on a society, therefore, each society especially the majority group, adopts a policy to tackle the majority-minority equation. According to Simpson and Yinger (1965) these policies are assimilation (forced or permitted), pluralism, legal protection, population transfer, continued subjugation and extermination of minorities. Some of these policies are barbarian in nature, which are not acceptable in a civilized society. However, the history of civilization shows that these policies are not exceptional. The mass killing of Jews by Nazis during World War II is an example of the policy of extermination. The forceful fleeing of the Nepalese minority from Bhutan in recent years is another example of a policy of extermination, population transfer, continued subjugation and forced assimilation. A civilized society adopts a policy for integration rather than subjugation or escape.

The purpose of integration is to weld a varied population into a unified whole with the purpose of maintaining social stability and social balance. Hess, Markson and Stein (1988) have classified policies into two broad categories; Melting Pot Model (MPM) and Cultural Pluralism Model (CPM). The Melting Pot Model of integration assumes that minorities will lose their cultural uniqueness and be a common part of dominant culture. As a tool of Melting Pot Model, education is used to promote a common language and culture. It is hoped that the children of a minority group would come to share similar norms and values through an education consisting of civics, common language and the lesson promoting patriotic feelings.

Melting Pot Model aims to create a common culture. It is mainly related to the culture of the dominant group. All the ethnic groups of a country, under this model, are turned into a common culture of the dominant group. Single language policy or declaring the country as the country of a particular ethnic group is an example of a policy. The constitutional declaration of Nepal as a Hindu country in the past, Pakistan as a Muslim country or Sri Lanka as a Buddhist country, for instance, can be taken as the examples

of this policy. The Cultural Pluralism Model is intended to develop a multicultural country. A multicultural model of national integration does not differentiate its citizen on the basis of origin, race, religion, ethnic background and culture.

The Melting Pot Model has its own limitations. It can promote a common culture only up to a certain level. An example is when the religious minority having strong religious beliefs does not want to lose its identity. Ethnic and racial background also poses a problem for integration in common culture. The minority group has strong self-respect, therefore, Melting Pot Model cannot achieve full success and thus social engineers adopt Cultural Pluralism Model for the integration of different parts of the society. According to Banks (1977) Cultural Pluralism Model implies an acceptance of differences in relatively personal matters such as food, family, religious rites, and community associations. It is like a salad bowl in which every ingredient remains distinct. Cultural pluralism or an open society can be achieved by two ways:

- (1) Shared Power Model in which social, economic and political power are shared between a majority and minority group or
- (2) Enlightening Powerful Group Model that is aimed to promote a positive attitude in the majority group towards a minority.

Kymlicka (2005) has examined the western policies for the mobilization of minorities and the possibility of adopting these policies in Asian countries. He says the model of multiculturalism in Europe is based on a liberal multicultural policy. He also analyzed the multicultural policies for the mobilization of different types of minorities' problems such as minority nationalism, indigenous peoples and immigrants.

Kymlicka says that minority nationalism is a problem related to a group, which is regionally concentrated in a part of a country and conceives itself as a nation within a larger state. It mobilizes nationalist political parties to achieve its nationhood, either in the form of an independent state or through territorial autonomy within the larger state. In the past, all countries of Europe attempted to suppress the forms of sub-state nationalism, taking such feeling as a threat to national unity and the state. Various efforts have been made to erode this sense of distinct nationalism such as restricting



language rights to the minorities, abolishing traditional form of self-governance and encouraging members of the dominant group to settle in the minority group's homeland.

However, there is a dramatic change in these policies based on the hegemony of the majority groups. Today, the European countries have accepted that Sub-state Nationalism will endure in the indefinite future. It can be accommodated by adopting multinational federalism i.e. creating a quasi-federal subunit in which the minority can exercise a meaningful form of self-governance.

European countries adopted some specific policy to accommodate the problems related to the minority group, labeled as indigenous people. In the past, European countries had same the goals and expectations that the indigenous people will disappear as a distinct community in the majority culture because of assimilation. Various policies were adopted to speed up this assimilation such as stripping indigenous peoples of their lands, restricting the practices of their traditional culture, language and religion and undermining their institution of self-governance. However, these policies have changed since the 1970s. Today, these governments believe that the indigenous group will remain for a long time into the future, so they must be given land rights, cultural rights and the right of self-governance.

Baogang and Kymlicka (2005) have also cross-examined the policy for the accommodation of minority problems in Asian countries and called it the new politics of diversity in Asia. According to them, managing diversity has become a key factor for the stability in this region. In the period of colonization in this region, all ethnic groups were united to liberate the countries from colonial forces. After independence, these countries adopted a homogenizing national state model. For a brief moment, this model, based on nationalism, seemed to be successful but later on, the minorities complained that the majority group in the country betrayed the promise of sharing power. The nation-state model adopted by these countries was used to promote the particular identity, culture of the dominant group, and it worked for their economic interest. It grew the struggle of self-governance and separate country in many parts of Asia. The writers put the example of the struggle of Acehnese in Indonesia, Karen in

Myanmar, Dalai Lama in Tibet, and Tamils in Sri Lanka. This problem requires the use of multicultural policy for the accommodation of the problems of the minority.

According to them, Ethnic conflicts are not only conflicts of power and interest; these are also for ideologies, norms and justice. They presented two models of multiculturalism; local and global. Global models, according to them, are those models arisen by the experience in Europe and local model are those models, which should be applied in Asian countries to overcome the specific minority problems in this region.

Colonial powers in Asia, under the legacy of colonialism, adopted the policy to divide and rule in the state and region. The local allies of these colonial forces were the ethnic minorities. Therefore, majority groups sometimes were these minority groups as illegitimately privileged at the best and disloyal collaborators at the worst. The colonial forces are blamed of fostering the feeling of interethnic distrust by making allies with minorities for their rule. However, the legacy of pre-colonial hierarchy presents that a majority dominated these minority groups in the pre-colonial stage. There was a legacy of hierarchy among these groups. Some were considered as civilized and others were considered as backward. Sometimes, these minorities joined their hands with colonial forces to protect them from the predations of a dominant group. After the time of independence from colonial forces, the pre-colonial hierarchy reoccurred and it posed a problem in the accommodation of minority problems.

The sense of geopolitical security is another problem in Asiatic countries for the mobilization of minority policies. Many countries of this region have less trust of their minority citizens, because they feel that they can collaborate with neighboring enemies based on the similarity of origin and dissimilarity with the majority group. According to the majority, the minorities can collaborate with formal imperial powers, or other international movement such as international communism or the international Islamic movement.

Baogang and Kymlicka (2005) further stated that a Western model of multiculturalism and minority rights has taken over after the consolidation of political democracy and market economy. In contrast, the voice for multiculturalism in Asia has begun with the rise of democracy. Democracy is a new experience in Asia and the Asiatic countries are

facing the problem of sequencing the issues of multiculturalism and minority rights. Similarly, the categories of minorities based on European experiences do not exactly match the Asiatic conditions. The claim of indigenous peoples may be the claim of a migratory population, who has settled there for a long time.

## **2.7 Social Inclusion**

There have been some notable contributions to a debate on social inclusion but this has not been closely integrated into the wider debate on exclusion. It, therefore, remains the case that in the majority of the exclusion, the literature, the nature and meaning of social inclusion is merely implied or asserted (Cameron, 2006). Only if the question of what constitutes inclusion is addressed can the question of what constitutes exclusion be posed. Each question is mutually dependent on the other (O'Reilly, 2005).

Cameron further argued that due to an inadequate understanding of what is meant by inclusion, the attention has been focused on the problems and deficits of 'excluded'. He deplored the way by which the issue of inclusion has been taken up in reference to the debate of exclusion, but failed to provide his own conceptualization on the issue. He eluded this shortcoming to a result of a general failure to develop a critical understanding of the real and discursive geographies of social inclusion. For instance, he remarks, where a conceptualization of inclusion does appear in the social exclusion literature, it is often only indirect. Frequently, for example, it appears in invocations of normal social expectation and participation or, more commonly, mainstream applied to various things that people are understood to be excluded from (labor market, economy, society, culture and citizenship among others). The meaning and location of the mainstream are routinely taken to be self-evident. As this implies, social inclusion is commonly defined only negatively, as whatever is not socially excluded. For this reason, much of the discussion of social inclusion is conceptually dominated by exclusion (social exclusion is the datum point against which social inclusion is both empirically measured and conceptually defined).

Despite this fact, social inclusion has been defined with regards to the social exclusion in many of the literatures. There can be simultaneous exclusion and inclusion, that is individuals and groups can be excluded in one domain and included in another domain.

For instance, social relations of kinship and marriage include while they exclude and affirm, as they deny membership rights (Jackson, 1999). Thus, one can talk about inclusion in the domain of language but the exclusion in political and economic domains, e.g. in the case of hill Dalits; or exclusion from the dominant language and culture but inclusion in political and economic domains, as in the case of Newars (Pradhan, 2006).

Likewise, Jackson (1999) drawing on the works of marginality by Tsing (1993) argues that marginality is both a source of constraint and creativity. Marginality offers both limitations and opportunities, for instance, women can use the idioms of motherhood and the domestic as the basis for voice. Feminist inquiries have also shown that marginality need not only be a social disadvantage but can be both the ground of resistant discourses and resource claims.

Jackson (1999) suggests that inclusion can also produce exclusion, and this occurs, when excluded groups successfully achieve inclusion on the basis of excluding groups even weaker than themselves. For example, women may deny their gender interest in bid for inclusion through adopting male postures or the socially mobile poor may position themselves nearer the center through dissociation from the seriously poor. Pradhan has claimed that social inclusion has been frequently created by constructing an excluded other in Nepal. However, many ethnic groups discriminate against the Dalits, and upper caste women discriminate against low caste women. He also argues that the hill ethnic groups and Dalits may achieve inclusion into the state structures by excluding the Madhesis, especially those who are neither Dalits nor indigenous nationalities.

Thus, the included or excluded dualism, apparent in the writings of social inclusion and exclusion, cannot be taken at face value. The politics of dualistic inclusion and exclusion deserve questioning in other ways. One, among these, is to consider in what sense there is a single center of social integration, who is excluded from what, and whose representation of the center is privileged (Jackson, 1999). Pradhan (2006) also warns against taking the arguments at face value. When he writes that the indigenous nationalities, dalits, women and Madhesis are excluded and thus have to be included,

without adding further qualifications, it may be politically correct and useful for research and project grants, but it does not really help us to understand the complexities of the relationships between exclusion and inclusion.

### **2.7.1 Exclusion and Inequality Discourse in Nepal**

Nepal's attempt at development, which began effectively during the 1951 transition to democracy, largely focused on class inequality in most part. Development was seen as reducing poverty through modernization by targeting individual citizens. However, these policies exacerbated inequality among various groups (Bista, 1991).

The dominant group largely benefited from the policies because even though couched in universal discourse, the policies and institutions were influenced by their values, worldviews and interests (Lawoti, 2005). For example, recruitment to the civil service through exams conducted in the native language of the dominant group resulted in their overwhelming domination of the bureaucracy.

The state promoted nationalism, which was based on hill Hindu religious values, the Khas, Nepali language of the dominant group, hill dress and the Hindu monarchy, projected the ethos and worldviews of the dominant group as universal while considering others as deviant (Lawoti, 2010)

Anthropologists and social scientists produced a corpus of knowledge on many ethnic groups that have contributed to understanding the status, including unequal positions, of those groups, but the studies rarely framed themselves explicitly from the exclusion and inequality angle, largely due to the unfriendly and constraining circumstances. Social exclusion/inclusion had not become a major theme of political or academic discourse before 1990.

The exclusionary nationalism, promoted by the state, was challenged after the policy opened up in 1990. Some political parties<sup>1</sup> and associations of ethnic groups and NGOs of Dalits pointed out the exclusion of the Dalit, indigenous nationalities, and Madhesi from various socio-economic, cultural and political realms and they argued

---

<sup>1</sup> Nepal Sadbhawana Party (Nepal Goodwill Party), RastriyaJanamukti Party (National Peoples' Liberation Party), Mongol National Organization

that the previous development and modernization policies had neglected or even discriminated against them (Lawoti, 2005 & Hangmen, 2010).

This new form of nationalism that emerged from society and has been empowering the traditionally marginalized group, sharply contrasts and, in fact, challenges the state-led and imposed exclusionary nationalism that had privileged high caste groups at the cost of Dalit, indigenous nationalities, Madhesis and minority religious groups like the Muslims. Initial attention on exclusion pivoted around cultural discrimination and on the under- or non-representation of various groups in the governance of the country.

Once the exclusion among different groups even under democracy was established and accepted to some extent in the mainstream political and social discourse by the late nineties, workers began to identify causes of exclusion. Many workers pointed out those formal institutions were the causes behind the exclusions. Constitutional articles that discriminated against native languages, minority religions, ethnic, caste and identity groups, the first-past-the-post electoral system and the unitary state were pointed out as contributing to exclusion (Bhattachan, 2000; Khanal, 2004; & Lawoti, 2005).

### **2.7.2 Social Inclusion and Exclusion Debate at Policy Level in Nepal**

The debate of social exclusion and inclusion has now pervaded both the official and development policy discourse in Nepal. Inclusion as an official policy made inroads into the government policy after inclusion was incorporated as one of the four pillars of Nepal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in 2003, which is also Nepal's Tenth Plan. The debates surrounding inclusion/exclusion have ascended to conspicuous importance in the present political transition in Nepal with several groups such as Dalit, women, indigenous communities, donor communities, Madhesi communities and region voicing their demands for an inclusive state by virtue of which, the issue has now come to be a part of the popular public discourse.

However, what has to be borne in mind is that the concept lacks universality in the way it has been defined and employed. Some claim that social exclusion is more illuminating and holds the promise of understanding disadvantaged groups better;

others argue that this concept is so evocative, ambiguous, multidimensional and elastic that can be defined in many different ways owing to its ambiguity in the definition

Contemporarily, inclusion, state restructuring, proportionate representations and federalism are the recurring themes in today's public discourse in Nepal.

The resurgence of ethnic identity was strengthened after the reinstatement of multiparty democracy in 1990. Along with ethnic revivalism, political parties also spearheaded issues and grievances of the Madhes, mainly the party that had its electoral base in the Madhes.

The ethnic groups, the Madhesi and Dalits have now challenged what they call the hegemony of the high-hill castes. Ethnic groups in particular have rejected and come down heavily on what they call the process of Hinduization, which according to them has relegated them to the margins. They have called for proportionate representation and ethnic autonomy with the right to self-determination. Likewise, the grievances of the Madhes that have now surfaced after the success of the Popular Mass Movement II are not new either. A number of years ago, Gaige had argued with reference to the Terai region that it had been geographically united; however, the State had not been able to accommodate the aspirations and culture of the Terai in the national framework (Gaige, 1975:195). He stated that the integration of the Terai in the national framework by force is not a viable option and a more realistic approach would be to draw the plains people into the national structure through participation in the nation's political life, through encouragement of the voluntary acceptance of national political and cultural values. Likewise, Dalits in both the hill and Terai face the brunt of the discriminatory practices prevailing in Nepal, since, it is a common practice whereby non-Dalits, including both caste and ethnic communities in both the hill and Terai regions as well as in rural and urban settings, exclude Dalits.

There is no doubt that the cultural and linguistic rights of the ethnic communities have been denied by the state. It would be wrong to treat the issue of exclusion in a simplistic manner or understand it through the binary opposition of exclusion or inclusion. Thus, it is imperative that the issue be discussed and debated among the

social sub-categories within the caste and ethnic population and members belonging to them.

Available literature in Nepal on social discrimination, exclusion, inequality has paid little attention to this. Rather, it puts forward an argument that the Brahmins and Chhetris are the most privileged among all castes and ethnic communities and they have remained in positions of power and have used this privilege to shape the system of values in society and divert its opportunities and resources in favor of their own communities (Pandey et al., 2006).

At a broader level of generality, these arguments are not unfounded. Nevertheless, Nepal's caste and ethnic population constitute a number of diversities, and internal variations among different ethnic communities exist. The debates of inclusion/exclusion in Nepal have not taken into account the differences in terms of the proportion of privileged population contained within each group, which indicates that 'other' analytical categories of comparison should be formulated while indicating the extent of inclusion or exclusion in Nepal.

People's access to education, politics and social and economic development differs according to their social identity, economic status and location in Nepal. The nation building process of Nepal has been largely discriminatory in practice in every sphere of life. The practice of the state was in favor of a single language, religion, culture and a particular region. Exclusion of a large group of peoples belonging to other languages, religions, cultures and regions from the mainstream political, economical, social, and cultural development is the result of these discriminatory policies and practices.

### **2.7.3 Dimensions of Social Exclusion in Nepal**

In Nepal, excluded groups comprise of women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities, Madhesis and Muslim communities, who are consistently excluded from mainstream development in the long term. People with disability, street or orphaned children and children from displaced and conflict-affected families and people in the remote regions especially from Karnali region fall within the excluded groups.



Restricted access to resources, services and opportunities, disempowerment, cultural and ritual debasement, discrimination and marginalization on the basis of caste, ethnicity, culture, language, religious affiliation, territorial or geographical origin, remoteness, gender and capacity constraints are some of the major forms of exclusion that different social groups are facing in the country. Social exclusion, including gender inequality, continues to be a major hindrance in Nepal's development. One of the reasons behind this is that most of the gains achieved through past development process in Nepal has gone to dominant caste and ethnic groups. Dimensions and the basis of exclusion prevalence in Nepal (Table 2.1)

**Table 2.1** Dimensions and Basis of Exclusion in Nepal

<b>Excluded Groups</b>	<b>Economic Status</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Social Status</b>
<b>Caste/ethnicity</b> (Dalits, Janajatis, Muslims and Madhesis)	Lower incomes and fewer opportunities-shaping human and physical assets (education, nutrition, land, livestock)	Language-based exclusion in education system, isolation due to remote locations (for Janajatis), less ability to pay for private services when public services fail	Lower self-perceived status (due to lack of respectful treatment or cooperation with other groups); restricted access to public places; very low representation in legislature, executive, judiciary, and civil service; lack of local political influence
<b>Gender</b> (Women and girls)	Lower initial human capital, unequal asset ownership and property rights. Restriction on the rights to migrate for employment.	Households favor for boys' education; female specific services (maternal & reproductive health) often under funded.	Limited rights in household decision-making (control over fertility, self-earned income); domestic violence; restricted mobility (need for permission to travel alone).
<b>Location</b> (those in remote areas)	Few economies of scale, few markets, high costs due to poor connectivity.	Higher unit cost of provision because of remoteness and low population density.	Poor representation (power is centralized in Kathmandu), the effects of civil conflict)
<b>Income Poverty</b> (the vicious circle)	Low assets, less ability to manage income volatility, less access to credit, fewer opportunities.	Poor publicly provided services, less purchasing power to buy services in the private market.	High cost of political and judicial institutions.

Source World Bank/ DFID/ADB, 2006

In Shakya (as cited in Rai, 2009) identifies three states of exclusion in Nepal — cultural, economic and political exclusion. He identifies the problems and suggests their agenda of inclusion in future( Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2** Problems and Agenda for Social Inclusion in Nepal

<b>Problems of Exclusion</b>	<b>Agenda for Inclusion</b>
<b>Cultural Exclusion</b>	
1. Religious Discrimination 2. Linguistic Discrimination	1. Secular State 2. Official Status
<b>Socio-economic Situation</b>	
3. Low Literacy 4. Unemployment	3. Targeted Education 4. Affirmative Action
<b>Political</b>	
5. Poor Representation 6. Subjugated in Governance	5. Proportional Representation 6. Ethnic Autonomy

On the contrary, the term social inclusion is used interchangeably against social exclusion. It is used as a state of a person to be able to participate in the public sphere with dignity. Currently, social inclusion has been the political agenda for state transformation in Nepal. Gurung (2006) states that the mainstreaming and empowerment of the disadvantaged, marginalized, downtrodden and oppressed people has been the main agenda of inclusion in Nepal.

DFID and World Bank (2006) outline the dimensions of exclusion in Nepal based on religion, caste and ethnicity, language, gender and geographical regions. They suggest that non-Hindus, especially indigenous nationalities, Dalits (untouchables), non-Nepali language groups, women, and Terai people are excluded in the country.

Gurung (2005, 2006) draws similar conclusions with more focus on caste and the ethnic dimension using statistical evidence from various sources. For instance, occupancy of the Hindu high-caste group in the governing elite of Nepal is 90 percent and that of hill origin people is two-thirds (66.2 percent).

According to Geiser (2005) the structural inequalities, especially when it comes to political representation and access to education and economic resources, based on gender and ethnicity, have been the main forms of social exclusion

Paying attention to the issues raised by social scientists and national and international organizations, the Government of Nepal has realized social exclusion as one of the

obstacles to poverty reduction. Hence, the government has outlined caste/ethnicity, gender, geographical location and extreme poverty as the major dimensions of social exclusion (NPC, 2002).

#### **2.7.4 Government Policy and Plans for Social Inclusion**

The Tenth Plan/PRSP aimed to address gender and ethnic/caste-related disparities and facilitate social inclusion by mainstreaming such efforts instead of simply relying on targeted programs. The plan also aimed to implement key sectoral programs paying attention to ensuring access to such programs for all, with special attention to assuring access of women and deprived communities. However, it also failed to intervene in structural issues of poverty and exclusion. Major issues in the social inclusion and targeted programs include; lack of clear-cut criteria to identify and define these programs; reporting and monitoring of these programs include mainly input and process indicators and the sources of information of development outcomes are made mainly at an aggregated level failing to give disaggregated data and information based on social groups and gender.

##### **2.7.4.1 Three-Year Interim Plan: Social Capital Formation**

Institutional as well as relational aspects of the traditional social structure in Nepal are still patronized by the state. Higher caste in the country is such a social or cultural capital that it enhances privileged access to prestigious positions with immense material and non-material benefits. However, becoming a member of a low or impure caste or ethnicity by birth divests him or her of such capital that it leads him or her to inherit deprivation, vulnerability, oppression, humiliation and insecurity. However, such values are slowly eroding and achieved identity is gaining prominence.

As the modernization drive is sweeping over all sections of the society, valued social relations associated with educational attainment, health status, skills proficiency and occupational or work experiences are emerging and replacing belongingness to caste/ethnicity or religion or so-called noble birth as social capital. Now, capability is becoming a form of social or human capital. It is an established fact that people with

better education, skills and health can contribute to more economic growth through higher labor productivity, use of improved technology and better management. With the rapid globalization, the emergence of service economy and new development challenges, building social and cultural capital has become crucial for Nepal.

#### **2.7.4.2 Rights-based Approach for Social Transformation**

The Three-year Interim Plan in Nepal has adopted a rights-based approach to social transformation. As per the provisions of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, various measures have been suggested for the universal enjoyment of the rights to education, health, social security and employment in the plan. The plan ensures that disempowered or excluded groups will have unhindered access to basic social services such as education and health services, water and sanitation, food and social protection and gainful employment and other productive resources. Policies and programs will be formulated and implemented in such a way that deprived or excluded people will equitably share the benefits of economic growth and development.

Excluded people or groups will immensely benefit from rural connectivity programs/projects. Infrastructure development programs/projects will be concentrated and activated to empower excluded or deprived people and not simply confined to the power holders' constituencies. Special efforts will be made for a gradual inclusion of excluded groups in all state institutions, so that distribution of opportunities will be more equitable which will have tremendous impact on the social transformation process.

#### **2.7.4.3 Social Inclusion in the Three-Year Interim Plan**

The Three-year Interim Plan (TYIP) involves a long-term vision of modern, prosperous and just Nepal. It aims to contribute to sustainable peace by means of reducing unemployment, poverty and inequality in the country. Moreover, the purpose of social inclusion is to improve human development of the excluded groups by guaranteeing their proportional participation in all state functions, decision-making processes and services.

Social inclusion is one of the six strategic pillars of the TYIP and is planned to mainstream the agenda in all other strategic pillars of the Plan. However, different social groups have different issues, though some are common issues. There are also some other factors which have been contributing to the exclusionary experiences of them. The TYIP well realizes the issues and provisions separate chapters including perspective vision, strategies<sup>2</sup>, policies and programs<sup>3</sup> that deal issues of women, Dalits, indigenous peoples, Madhesis, Muslims and disables. In addition, gender equity, equality and women empowerment are regarded as more than just issues of the social exclusion in the Plan. Inclusion and genderization are believed to be instrumental in ensuring participation of excluded groups, deprived people, the poor and women in the development process and outcomes. The values of liberty, social/distributive justice, equity, human rights and economic growth have been reconciled in the strategies, policies and programs in a way that do not undermine the values of one's ideological approach at the cost of the others.

Thus, the Interim Plan has the policy of improving the living standard of women, Dalits, indigenous nationalities, Madhesis, Muslims, disables, and the poor. The plan

---

<sup>2</sup> Improve HDI and reduce income poverty levels of the excluded groups through special efforts and effective targeted initiatives, increase participation in policy/ decision making positions and processes through proportional representation, reservation or any other appropriate approaches, promote socially inclusive legal provisions, Improve access to resources, services and opportunities, focus on empowerment, identity assertion and capacity building, promote multiculturalism through the preservation and promotion of languages, literatures, arts, cultures, skills and traditional knowledge, initiate positive discrimination and reservation in education, health, employment, participation, capacity building and public services, adopt cross-sectoral concerted approach to eliminate social exclusion effectively, gradually engender macro-economic framework and social and political development processes in order to promote inclusive development

<sup>3</sup> Conduct linguistic survey and promote linguistic pluralism, increase access in education through scholarships, feeder hostels and reservation, promote pro-inclusive public investments, disables-friendly physical infrastructures (implement accessibility codes) special education and sports, Awareness and leadership development programs/ programs of developing human capabilities (human capital), economic empowerment programs to shift balance of advantages in the egalitarian direction, entrepreneurship and skills development programs, legal refinements- make them inclusive in line with constitutional provisions, international instruments (ILO convention 169), resettlements programs (for landless, conflict-affected), Karnali employment scheme, comprehensive plan to address issues of exclusion, networking among agencies and institutions working for the excluded groups, institutional development of the institutions established, reduce social distances, economic inequalities and promote social cohesion, establishment of resource centers, mother tongue education/multilingual education to improve access to education and learning levels/outcomes, affirmative action initiatives in education, employment and health, preservation and promotion of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of all groups, food security measures, special programs targeting to Dalits, indigenous nationalities, Madhesis, disables and women.

aims to avoid the institutional, structural, legal obstacles to end the long-term deprivation to ensure their inclusion into the mainstream process and the subsequent assertion of their social, cultural, economic and human development.

#### **2.7.4.4 Inclusion of Muslims in the Three-Year Interim Plan**

In the Muslim community, there is a high level of poverty while the education and health indicators are low. They have also very low access to productive resources and national policy and governance structures. Thus, the challenge is to preserve the culture, traditions and language of the community and increase their access in all levels of national governance structures.

The Three Year Interim Plan (TYIP) aims to improve the livelihood of the Muslim community by increasing their access in social and economic resources and in all levels of the state structures on a proportional basis. In addition, the strategies in the Plan include social and economic transformation of the community through eliminating the constraints present thereof, implement need based specially targeted programs, adopt positive discrimination measures in health, education, social services and public services. Adopting a policy to preserve the language and culture of the Muslim community and institutional development of Muslim organizations are further policy measures.

### **2.8 Muslims and Islamic Education**

The nature and orientation of Muslims towards their religion is clarified in various literatures. Before analyzing the religious orientation of Muslim society, a general introduction of Islam, the religion followed by the Muslims is presented. When studying the history of Islam, it is evident that the rise of Islam is a unique event in the history of human civilization, which reflects the nature and rise of civilization of all humankind. The Islamic religion originated in the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia) and spread all over the world. Now it is a religion followed by about 18 percent of the world's population. It is the second largest religion in the world today (Schaefer et al., 1992: 415).

The Quran is the main religious text of Muslims and the tradition of Islamic education began with the reading and recitation of the Quran. In the early days of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad himself used to teach his followers the divine revelations and its interpretations. After the compilation of the divine verses into the form of a book (Quran), it became the central part of the Islamic education. It is the religious duty of every Muslim to follow all the instructions of the Quran wholeheartedly.

Islamic education is not limited only to the dissemination of religious knowledge, rather it has instructed Muslims to acquire other earthly knowledge, which is necessary for the welfare of human beings. These instructions have played a vital role in the development of a distinct education system, known as Islamic education. The Islamic education system includes a definite objective, curricular structure and a chain of educational intuitions for dissemination of Islamic knowledge.

### **2.8.1 Aim of Islamic Education**

The aims of education are derived from the aim of life determined by those philosophical sources, which influences the life of a particular group of people. Education is only a vehicle for the attainment of the aims of life. Since Muslims are a religious value predominant society, the aim of their life is mainly determined by religious guidance.

According to Islamic belief, the aim of life is to get to paradise in the next world, or in the world of philosophy, self-realization or self-perfection. Muslims use education as a means for the attainment of the aims of life. Islamic religion clearly instructs its followers to acquire education to fulfill these great aims of life. Miasahib (1991) has mentioned two broad levels of education for Muslims.

1. FarzeAin (Compulsory Duty or a Learning Needed for Every Muslim)
2. FarzeKafayah (Social or Collective Duty)

It is a compulsory duty of Muslim to acquire knowledge of FarzeAin. According to Islamic belief, a person having complete faith only in this religion can be termed a true Muslim (Abdalati, 1995). To acquire a clear knowledge of all these matters Muslims

should study the Quran and Hadith. According to the religious guidance of Islam, if a person accepts this religion, it becomes his/her compulsory duty to know the elementary rules of rituals, prayers, religious and social duties which are expected to be performed by him/her as a complete and faithful believer of Islam. Since the Quran and Hadith are, the prime source of providing such knowledge it is therefore the compulsory duty of every Muslim to gain knowledge about these two sources of religious guidance.

The second aim of Islamic education is 'FarzeKafayah' or collective duty. It is related to the learning, which should be acquired by some members of Muslim community for the sake and welfare of other community members. Only after getting the knowledge of FarzeKafayah, a Muslim attains exemption from sin. According to this aim, if the community needs some type of expertise for its welfare, it becomes the basic duty of a Muslim to acquire such expertise.

## **2.9 International Laws, Rights and Instruments in Relation to Education**

MDGs: Commitments to Equitable and Inclusive Education.

The Millennium Development Goals, developed in 2000, constitute a set of international commitments that currently drive the 'development agenda', with 'poverty reduction' as central to the current development discourse. In many countries, the MDGs act as the basis for poverty reduction strategies and sector plans. Meanwhile, many development agencies have revised their policies and priorities around meeting these goals. Among eight areas of MDGs, three have direct bearing on education.



**Table 2.3** The Millennium Development Goals**Goal 1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger**

Target 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day.

Target 2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

**Goal 2. Achieve Universal Primary Education**

Target 3. Ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

**Goal 3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**

Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

**Source** United Nations, 2000

It should be noted that social exclusion is directly addressed in the goals only with regard to the gender inequality. With regard to education, there is a new emphasis on ‘completion’ (in contrast to earlier goals stressing enrollment). However, the gender goal refers only to numerical ‘parity’ of enrollment, not a wide concept of equality.

Nepal’s basic education program – EFA (2004-2009) – is based on the six EFA goals<sup>4</sup> and four additional goals of ensuring the right of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through the mother tongue. The EFA Core Document stresses Nepal’s involvement in key EFA events (Jomtien, Dakar). The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) identifies education as a key way to reduce poverty. It also has the National Plan of Action for EFA and the UN Millennium Development Goals.

The EFA goals do not contradict the education-related MDGs, but considerably expand them. There is a stronger emphasis on the quality and relevance of education, an expanded concept of gender equality including the concept of ‘equity in quality’ and a more explicit mention of socially excluded groups (namely vulnerable and

<sup>4</sup> Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free, and compulsory primary education of good quality; ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs; achieve a 50 % improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality and improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy and essential life skills.

disadvantaged children, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities (UN CRC, 1989).

A number of international and regional rights conventions and declarations commit signatory countries to addressing social exclusion and inequality and ensuring the right of each child to good quality, relevant education. Some key points are:

- Articles 28 and 29 of CRC, 1989, which ensure children's rights to education.
- ILO Convention, which advocates ensuring access to free basic education and, wherever possible, appropriating vocational training for all children removed from the worst forms of child labor.

Government of Nepal has two strategic aims through the development of education—ensuring every child the right to free and quality-basic education and investing in education as a means of stimulating economic growth and poverty reduction.

Education is regarded as a right within key government documents. For instance, the EFA Core Document outlines a vision for 2015: Every child has a right to receive education of good quality, which is ensured by legal provisions. Each child between the age group of 6-10 in Nepal has access to and completion of free and compulsory, quality-basic and primary education.<sup>5</sup>

Education has been formally recognized as a human right since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which proclaims that:

1. everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all based on merit.

---

<sup>5</sup> (1) Expand early childhood care and education; (2) Provide free and compulsory primary education for all; (3) Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults; (4) Increase adult literacy by 50 per cent; (5) Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015 (6) Improve the quality of education. Irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, and geographic location.

2. education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

This declaration stresses the use of teaching and education to promote respect for these rights. Since then, many global declarations and conventions affirmed the right to education. All these declarations and conventions establish an entitlement to free, compulsory primary education for all children; an obligation to develop secondary education, supported by measures to render it accessible to all children, as well as equitable access to higher education; and a responsibility to provide basic education for individuals who have not completed primary education. Furthermore, they affirmed that the aim of education is to promote personal development, strengthen respect for human rights and freedoms, enable individuals to participate effectively in a free society, and promote understanding, friendship and tolerance.

One of the recommendations of the Colombo Resolution of Children (1992) Second SAARC Conference on Children in South Asia's was— Access to and enrollment in primary education for at least 80 percent of boys and 75 percent of girls, and completion of primary education by at least 50 percent of girls as well as boys by 1995.

SAARC Development Goals (2005–10) include access to primary or community school for all, completion of the primary education cycle, universal functional literacy, quality education at primary, secondary and vocational levels, and reduce vulnerabilities of the poor, women and children.

SAARC Child Rights Decade (2001–10) include enable all children of primary school age to complete primary school at the required level of learning and eliminate child labor from the SAARC region. Likewise, Beijing Platform for Action recognizes the right of female children to education.

The right to education has long been recognized as encompassing not only access to educational provision, but also the obligation to eliminate discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve quality. In addition, education is necessary for the fulfillment of any other civil, political, economic or social rights.

UNESCO Bangkok (2004) in collaboration with the Ms. Katarina Tomasevski, published a manual on Rights-Based Education. The manual translates the globally accepted human rights standards relevant to the education sector into guidelines for national education strategies. It does so by utilizing the four-A approach first outlined by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the Right to Education. It describes government obligations to protect, respect and fulfill the right to education in terms of making education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. These rights are explained as follows:

**Availability:** It is related to the obligation to ensure compulsory and free education for all children in the country within a determined age range, up to at least the minimum age of employment. It is also related to the obligation to respect parental freedom to choose education for their children, according to the best interests of the child.

**Accessibility:** It is concerned with the obligation to eliminate exclusion from education based on the internationally prohibited grounds of discrimination such as race, color, sex, language, religion, opinion, origin, economic status, birth, social or HIV/AIDS status, minority or indigenous status,

**Acceptability:** It is the obligation to set minimum standards for education, including the medium of instruction, contents and methods of teaching, and to ensure their observance in all educational institutions and the obligation to improve the quality of education by ensuring that the entire education system conforms to all human rights.

**Adaptability:** It is related to the obligation to design and implement education for children excluded from formal schooling and the obligation to adapt education to the best interests of each child, especially regarding children with disabilities, or minority and indigenous children. (Tomasevski, 2004)

UNESCO published a guideline for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Education (2007) and included three indicators:

**Right to Access Education:** Every child has equal rights and opportunity to education without discrimination on any grounds. To achieve this goal, education must be available for, accessible to and inclusive of all children.

**Right to Quality Education:** Every child has the right to a quality education that enables him or her to fulfill his or her potential, realize opportunities for employment and develop life skills. To achieve this goal, education needs to be child-centered, relevant and embrace a broad curriculum, and be appropriately resourced and monitored.

**Right to Respect within the Learning Environment:** It is the right of every child to respect her or his inherent dignity and to have her or his universal human rights respected within the education system. To achieve this goal, education must be provided in a way that is consistent with human rights, including equal respect for every child, opportunities for meaningful participation, freedom from all forms of violence, and respect for language, culture and religion.

### **2.9.1 Multicultural Education Policies**

Countries of the modern world are multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual in relation to the background of their citizens, where people from different backgrounds live together in cohesion. All civilized countries of the modern world express their commitment against any type of discrimination towards their citizens based on their origin, race, language, culture, gender or other backgrounds. Multicultural educational policies have become an essential policy to be adopted for providing a change based on equity to every citizen. Multicultural educational policies are the educational policies adopted by different governments to foster multiculturalism inside the country.

Bennett (1990) defines multicultural education as approaches to teaching and learning based upon democratic values that foster cultural pluralism in its most comprehensive form it is a commitment to achieving education equality, developing a curriculum that builds understanding about ethnic groups, and combating oppressive practices.

Banks (1981) has identified five phases/courses for the development of multicultural education in the United States.

**Mono-ethnic Courses:** It was the time when different cultural groups of US such as Mexican-Americans and American-Indians demanded courses for their cultural needs and institutions responded by developing mono-ethnic courses by stressing single culture. It provided a portrait of different cultures and their contributions.

**Multiethnic Study Courses:** With the demand of inclusion of cultural values of different ethnic group in curricula, multiethnic study courses were developed. Such courses included the cultures of different groups in a common course. It was focused on several minority groups and viewed experiences of ethnic groups.

**Multiethnic Courses:** Educators now realize that ethnic studies are necessary but not sufficient to bring effective education reform and equity. Educationists call for a more broadly conceptualized kind of educational reform with a focus on the total school environment. Multiethnic education specialists view the total school as a unit of change. This reform developed the concept of multiethnic education. It was a development of pluralistic education. It recognized the need for effective materials to enable minority groups to improve their achievement levels.

**Multicultural Education:** With the rise of multicultural education, educators attempt to address the educational problems of not only the ethnic minorities, but also the problem of women, religious groups, handicapped, regional groups are addressed. It includes the total school environment. It enables school districts and universities to focus on a wider range of groups, rather than a limited focus on racial ethnic minorities.

**Institutionalization:** Under this concept, education is designed to increase the pace and scope of multicultural education in the implementation phase.

Banks (1997) proposes different dimensions of multicultural education. These dimensions present the strategies to be adopted for providing multicultural education. As described above, multicultural education is needed to foster cultural pluralism and end oppressive practices. It helps to achieve education equality and understanding

among ethnic groups. These dimensions may be equally important for tackling problems of Muslims of Nepal in education. The dimensions are:

- 1. Knowledge Construction:** The knowledge construction process moves to a different level because in it teachers help students to understand, investigate, and determine the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference and perspectives of the discipline they are teaching. In other words, teachers help students to understand what the values that underlie knowledge area and specifically how historians or scientists construct knowledge.
- 2. Equity Pedagogy:** By equity pedagogy, teachers change their methods to enable students from diverse racial groups and both genders to excel. In equity pedagogy, teachers modify their teaching styles so that they use a wide range of strategies and teaching techniques such as cooperative groups, simulations, role-playing, and discovery.
- 3. Prejudice Reduction:** The focus here is on the responsibility of teachers to reduce prejudice in the classroom. It is found that adolescent prejudice is very real, and that children come to school with prejudices toward different groups. All educators should use methods to help children develop more positive racial attitudes.
- 4. Empowering School Culture and Social Structure:** Not only the individual classrooms, but the total school culture should be made more equitable. For example, grouping and labeling practices, participation in sports, and interactions of the school staff and any disproportionate achievements should be made more equitable.

## **2.10 Constitutional Provisions for Minority Rights**

In Nepal, the Interim Constitution, 2007, has guaranteed the minority rights constitutionally. This constitution was introduced after the success of the People's Movement of 2006. The present Interim Constitution does not discriminate its citizen on any ground. The 3rd part of this constitution is related to fundamental rights and assures that any person belonging to any minority group has the right to equality, right against untouchability and racial discrimination, right to education and culture, right to social justice and right to religion.

Article 13, states that all citizens should be equal before the law. No person should be denied equal protection by the laws. No discrimination should be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe, origin, language or ideological conviction or any combination of these. The state shall not discriminate among citizens on grounds of religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, origin, language or ideological convictions about any of these. It also assures that nothing shall prevent the making of special provisions by law for the protection, empowerment or advancement of the interests of women, Dalit, indigenous peoples, Madhesi, and those who belong to a class, which is economically, socially or culturally backward, and children, the aged and disabled.

Article 14 states the right against untouchability and racial discrimination, according to which no person should be subjected to racial discrimination and untouchability of any form on the grounds of caste, descent, community or occupation. Such a discriminating act should be liable to punishment and the victim should be entitled to the compensation as provided by law. No person should, on the grounds of caste or tribe, be deprived of the use of public services, conveniences or utilities, or should be denied access to any public place, or public religious places, or be denied to perform any religious act. No one should be allowed to demonstrate superiority or inferiority against any person or a group of persons belonging to any caste, tribe or origin; to justify social discrimination based on the cast and tribe, or to disseminate ideas based on caste superiority or hatred; or to encourage caste discrimination in any form.

Article 17 provides education and cultural rights to all its citizens without discrimination. It ensures that each community shall have the right to basic education in their mother tongue and every citizen shall have the right to free education from the State up to secondary level as provided for in the law. It also ensures that each community residing in Nepal should have the right to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civility and heritage.

Similarly, Article 21 of the constitution has provisioned rights to social justice ensuring the policy of inclusion by stating that women, Dalits, indigenous peoples, Madhesi, oppressed groups, the poor peasant and laborers, who are economically, socially or



educationally backward, should have the right to participate in the state mechanism on the basis of proportional inclusive principles.

Article 23 provides rights to religion stating that every person shall have the right to profess, practice and preserve his/her own religion as handed down to him/her from ancient times having due regard for the social and cultural traditional practices. It also states that no person should be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another, and should not act or behave in a manner, which may jeopardize the religion of others.

This constitution has incorporated many provisions for minority groups. For the first time, this constitution literally addresses many minority groups such as women, Dalits, indigenous peoples, Madhesi community, oppressed groups, the poor peasants and laborers who are economically, socially or educationally disadvantaged.

In summary, present constitutional provisions in Nepal do not discriminate against its citizens in any background and allow their full participation in social life preserving their religion and culture. Past practices have caused discriminatory behavior to the Muslims, a religious minority in Nepal.

## **2.11 Minority Mobilization Policies in Nepal**

Nepal has adopted specific policies regarding the mobilization of ethnic groups and minorities in the country. Pfaff-Czarnecka (1997) has examined the policy of cultural mobilization of ethnic groups and national integration in Nepal. According to her, the first model 'The empire model' worked from the rise of Shah Dynasty in Nepal until the end of Rana Regime in 1951. The beginning of this period is marked by forceful unification of Nepal, which was divided into many political units of Baise and Chaubise states. The key factors that remained all along the unification process were the use of Hinduism as a source of unification. Prithvi Narayan Shah, the chief unifier of Nepal described his kingdom as Asali Hindustan (real home of Hindus) in his enlightened teaching (Dastider, 2007). Two major elements of this process of identity formation were the form of patriotism expressed via loyalty to the King and the prominence of Hindu religion. As members of ethnic groups were increasingly

neglected, the high-caste Hindus moved towards the center of power. The first MulukiAin (Country Code- 1854) devoted a major part of it in defining relations between various castes, the violation of which became a state offense. The Hindu caste hierarchy, which became a state protected ideology since 1854, also played its role in shaping the character of national society where the Parbatiya castes continued to dominate political power structure of the Nepali state through cultural legacy (Dastider, 2007). This system labeled Muslims as 'Mlechhya', the lowest hierarchy in the caste system of Nepal.

According to Pfaff-Czarnecka (1997), the model of national integration adopted by Nepal in the Panchayat period was the 'The nationalistic model.' The Nepalese King essentially controlled all of the executive, judicial and legislative powers. The Constitution of Nepal, circa 1962, stated that Nepal is a Hindu kingdom in which sovereignty was vested in kinship. Claims on national homogeneity marked the modernization drive of this period. With the monarch and the majority of top officials being high caste Hindus, the portrayal of distinctive national characteristics came to be characterized strictly by Nepali language, Nepali dress and hill Hinduism (Dastider, 2007).

The Patchwork of Minorities Model began with the restoration of democracy in 1990 giving more impetus to minority demand. Minorities may now operate freely in the public sphere. The question of national identity and quest for participation in policy making and the distribution of welfare resources arose. With increasing social complexity, minorities not confined to social peripheries threatened the national unity envisaged and enforced by the central measures. The more minority groups that came into being, the more complicated the became the task of the central administration.

The existing Interim Constitution of Nepal declares Nepal a secular state committed to the progressive restructuring of the state in order to resolve existing problems of the country based on class, caste region and gender. It is hoped that Nepal will develop into a multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual country and that there will be an end to all disparities on the basis of religion, caste, race, class and geographical settings.

In relation to Nepalese Muslims, there is no particular national policy to overcome their problem due to their minority status. It does not mean that Nepal has no minority policy but these policies are for general minority groups and not for a particular one. On the state level, Nepal's constitution does not discriminate its citizen based on race, caste, religion, sex etc. Each Nepalese citizen has equal fundamental rights. The Interim Constitution of Nepal guarantees against discrimination and provides rights of primary education in their own mother tongue. However, the minority policy of Nepal is comparatively more of a 'melting pot model' than a 'cultural pluralistic model'. Use of a single national language, common curriculum, and Nepali as a medium of instruction provides a single framework to all the minority groups including Muslims.

Among the list of different nationally recognized languages, Urdu, the dialect generally used by Muslims does not have a place. The Madrasa education is not fully recognized by the government, which restricts their access to higher education and the job market. However, the government has started to register Madrasas as a type of primary school without any fee deposit from 2007. Many Madrasas in Nepal have been registered at DEO, but this provision is contested. Many Muslims, especially the Maulvies have expressed their dissatisfaction with this endeavor because they think this government step will contaminate the cultural environment of Madrasas.

## **2.12 Educational Policies and Plans in Nepal**

Many commissions and programs have been launched to uplift the quality of education in the country. The first education commission- Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC, 1954) recommends for the establishment of a public education system from the basic to higher level, free and supported by government. This commission, for the first time, sought that the state bears the responsibility of providing education to all its citizens. All-round National Education Committee (ARNEC, 1962) was the second commission that recommended a common national curriculum and Nepali as the medium of instruction in schools of Nepal hence discriminating against other language-speaking children in the country. However, it has put attention to some excluded groups such as those with disabilities and recommended for the adaptation of special provisions to educate them. It also recommended free and compulsory primary

education, yet the commission discriminated against the minority language groups and restricted them access to education in their mother tongues.

The third such commission was the National Education Commission (NEC, 1992) which was formed to make recommendations regarding education policies after the changing context of the country with the restoration of democracy in 1991. This commission, for the first time, recommended the provision of primary education in the mother tongue to fulfill the needs of different language groups in the country. It recommended incorporating the values of different caste groups in curriculums with the aim of promoting mutual understanding and knowledge. It also recommended for the provision of educating females, handicaps, economically and socially backward communities and peoples of backward regions. Ultimately, this commission ended the hegemony of Nepali as the only language of instruction in schools. However, the real situation has not changed and mother tongue education has not been effectively implemented in the schools yet.

The Higher Level Nepalese Education Commission (1998) was the first commission that categorically recommends different policies and strategies to educate the excluded groups in the country. It identified females, Dalits, backward communities, poor people, language groups, and those with disabilities, as the disadvantaged groups and recommended for different policies to increase their access to schooling. These recommendations included provision of scholarship, appointment of female teachers, admission quotas in different areas of training, incorporation of values of different groups in the curriculum, awareness programs, and development of books in the mother tongue.

In conclusion, these recommendations made by various education commissions are general in nature and not particularly to specific minority groups. Although, the last two commissions, NEC and HLNEC have attempted to address some particular disadvantaged groups, these commissions, however, did not address the problems of Muslims in Nepal.

However, the National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971) was one of the most ambitious plans that completely restructured Nepalese education in relation to its

structure, organization, curricula and policies. It recommended Nepali as the medium of instruction up to the secondary level. It also recommends for a standardized national curriculum for the schools. It developed a provision for the use of other languages as a medium of instruction only after the approval of the authority. It also completely controlled the establishment of any school other than government schools. These provisions were exclusionary to other cultural groups and lingual minorities including Muslims.

At present, 'Education for All' has been a major agenda of educational plans of Nepal. In the last decade, Nepal has made remarkable progress in this regard. Because of endeavors in the field of education, Nepal's literacy rate has increased by 14.1 percent in the ten-year period from 1991 to 2001. However, the literacy rate among minority groups is very low because they still have low access to education. The Literacy rate for Muslims is 34.7 percent. Although, their literacy rate has increased remarkably in the last decade by 22.4 percent, they are still far behind than the national average (CBS, 2001).

Basic Primary Education Project, a mega plan in the field of primary education, listed some groups as 'Special Focus Groups' including the Muslims and implemented special incentive schemes to promote their enrollment in primary level schools. The Ministry of Education (MOE), similarly, has included Muslims in a 'Special Focus Group' and developed special programs and policies to increase their access to mainstream education. All of these policies and programs have been developed in alignment with the EFA.

Popular Mass Movement- 2006 has directed the country towards a new vision in order to enhance the social and economic development with inclusion covering women, Dalits, Janajatis, Madhesis, Muslims and people with disabilities. Likewise, the provision made in the Education Act (7th Amendment) for the use of mother tongue in primary classes can be considered as a more positive step towards addressing the instructional needs of indigenous and linguistic minority children across the country. The introduction of the Interim Plan (2007 - 2010) has added a feather to the education policies and programs of the country. In order to address the directives of the Interim

Constitution with the purpose of social inclusion of marginalized groups, policies were formulated to provide education to children in their mother tongue by adopting a three-language policy. At the same time, the Plan has recommended the development of a system for the accreditation of the traditional education provided by Gurukul, Madrasa, Ashram and Gonpa to make them equivalent to regular formal education.

School Sector Reform (SSR) Core Document (2008) has developed different plans and policies to address the educational and cultural needs of the marginalized groups in the country. It has emphasized cultural diversity as a national treasure of Nepal and admitted with historical significance that some communities do not equally benefit from development interventions, mainly, because of their limited access to educational opportunities. Despite these efforts, a number of minority groups and ethnic communities are still facing marginalization. Disadvantaged groups such as women, Dalits, Madhesi, disabled and ethnic minorities have low levels of participation in schooling. This document admitted that raising the participation of these groups is a key challenge for the government of Nepal.

Describing the educational context of this program, the Core Document has accepted that the current level of NER is satisfactory though there are challenges to ensuring access to school-going aged children at the primary level and to improving their retention and quality of education. This document also describes the opportunities for the accomplishment of these goals. The Document states that social groups expect education to affirm their language and respect their cultural identity. The government has an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to meet the rising expectations of the people by improving equitable access to education. The goal of equitable access includes parity, equity and equality in participation, achievement and dignity for girls and marginalized groups. All marginalized groups including, Dalits, ethnic minorities, disabled, and economically needy populations will have equitable access to quality basic education.

Social inclusion is an important agenda of the policy framework of the Core Document. The Document further affirms that the government will ensure the inclusion of children from socially disadvantaged groups in education. The policy for social inclusion will be

an overarching framework for equitable access to quality education for all. Options for affirmative action at the school level for increasing proportion of women and people from disadvantaged include; — i) incentives for schools recruiting head-teachers from these groups, ii) a quota system for recruiting teachers and personnel in management positions from these groups, and iii) criteria for teacher selection weighted in favor of candidates from these groups (MOES, 2005).

Before the SSR Document, MOES had developed many plans and policies to uplift the educational status of marginalized groups. It had developed an action plan and set thematic strategies to accomplish the EFA goals and targets guided this plan. There were altogether seven thematic goals of the action plan, among them three goals were directly related to the education of cultural minority group;

1. Free and Compulsory Primary Education
2. Appropriate Learning for Life Skills
3. Ensuring Social Equity and Gender Parity

The Goal of Free and Compulsory Education included a task objective to improve the relevancy of mainstream curriculum to the ethnic groups by the revision of the curriculum<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, the Goal of Appropriate Learning for Life Skills included a task objective to empower special focus group people from disadvantaged communities such as ethnic groups, linguistic minorities and Dalits to gain access to appropriate learning and life skill<sup>7</sup>. The Goal of Ensuring Social Equity and Gender Parity likewise included some strategies for the equity-based education in the country<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> Implement three language policy (local, national and English)

- Incorporation of cultural values of different cultural groups in the text materials
- Allow flexibility in curriculum and make it contextual
- Rewrite social studies focusing on inspiring contributions made by different ethnic and cultural groups in the process of nation building

<sup>7</sup> Identify the status and difficulties of special focus group people

- Develop provision of special support/motivation for facilitating the groups to enter and get benefit from mainstream education system (MOES, 2005)

<sup>8</sup> Advocacy measures to sensitize the stakeholders of education in relation to ensure cultural sanitization in matters ethnic disputes,

- Meritocracy measures to cater for the meritorious students comprising girls, Dalit, children of the ethnic groups, and disabled.
- Pedagogical measures to cater for the children of special needs such as, ethnic groups and others

In order to empower the indigenous peoples and linguistic minorities, MOES emphasizes the need to make primary schooling relevant to minority children. The Government has introduced a policy on designing 20 percent of the curricular contents based on local contexts in order to reflect diverse local cultures in the school curriculum and to make it child and cultural friendly according to their needs (MOES, 2005).

The Ministry of education has launched a program from 2007 to register the Madrasas as a type of primary school. The government presented a program to register Madrasas without any registration fees based on their demand if their grade-wise student numbers and physical facilities are satisfactory according to clause 77 of the Education Rule-2059. According to clause 52 of the same, the Madrasas will be allowed to conduct alternative schooling if the number of students is not enough. The registered Madrasa can conduct the grade-wise examination themselves up to grade five, and district level examination through the District Education Office (DEO) or Resource Centers. For Alternative schooling, the DEO is supposed to arrange the examination for the grade-wise examination through a registered local school, based on the learning achievements of each grade. The DEO is supposed to provide the certificate of their score based on the examination taken by the school.

The registered Madrasas are provided a sum of Rs. 12,000 after each fifty student as a SIP fund. This fund can be spent for educational materials. There is also plan to provide teachers for these Madrasas under a relief quota. This endeavor has received a very positive reaction from the Muslim community. Consequently, many Madrasas have been registered as a primary school in the country (DOE, 2007).

However, the registration of Madrasas has also brought up many issues. According to Parwez, et al. (2008) although parents and students were enthusiastic towards this step, Maulvies have their concerns about the cultural environment of Madrasas. They claimed that Madrasas are Islamic institutions established to provide Islamic education to Muslims. Registration might adulterate their cultural environment.

- 
- Measures for the enhancement of cultural identities particularly that of the ethnic minorities and Dalits.
-



A serious concern about the registration of Madrasas relates to the curriculum operated by the Madrasas. It is found that many Madrasas are teaching both Islamic and mainstream courses, which has increased the workload of both the teachers and students. There is confusion about how to maintain a proper balance of these courses. The report has identified some challenges in registered Madrasas. An example, as per the CERID, is that it is impossible to maintain the quality of education without providing mainstream subject-teachers and financial support from the government to Madrasa. Lack of proper curriculum development, sustainable financial resources, physical infrastructure and skilled teachers are additional hindrances to ensuring quality education in Madrasa.

In light of above endeavors, the Government of Nepal is committed to addressing these social exclusion issues of Muslims and working to improve the quality of education in schools by implementing different measures. However, the program implementation, monitoring and evaluation part is not effective in the study area

## **2.13 Review of Previous Studies on Muslims and their Educational Situation in Nepal**

### **2.13.1 Books Review**

#### **Islamic Revival in Nepal: Religion and a New Nation**

Megan Adamson Sijapati

London and New York, Routledge, 2011.

Pages: 182

Megan AdamsonSijapati is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where she teaches courses on South Asian religions, Islam and religious conflict and cooperation. She did her Ph.D on Shaping Muslim Identities: Alterity, Conflict and Islamic Revival in Nepal.

She conducted her fieldwork in Kathmandu Valley in 2005–06 in the context of the Maoist rebellion, which ended in the transformation of the Hindu kingdom of Nepal into a secular democracy. This book draws an extensive fieldwork among Muslims in

Nepal to examine the local and global factors that shape contemporary Muslim identity and the emerging Islamic revival movement based in the Kathmandu Valley.

Her study centers on the religious and political mobilization engineered by a group of revivalists based in Kathmandu and which aims at gaining the leadership of the entire community of the Nepalese Muslims. The movement which started in 1985 gained momentum after the first major anti-Muslim riot in Nepal, the 'Black Wednesday' (KaloBuddhvar) on 1 September 2004.

The book is mainly based on the event known as Black Wednesday. The book has seven chapters including an introduction and epilogue. The book is recently published and stands as one of the important books presenting for the first time a comprehensive study of the evolution of Kathmandu Valley Muslims from 1985 to 2010. It is written with personal, detailed observations and presents an impressive depository of interviews of the main personalities, newspaper articles and scholarly publications treating the subject, books and pamphlets used by the Kathmandu Muslims and sometimes written by them. It offers a precise narration of the events and a detailed description of the organizations involved. Particularly appreciable are the considerations on the 'structural' violence underlying Hindu-Muslim relations and the pages devoted to the Muslim women at the end of the book. The structure of the book is clear and balanced.

Chapter two ably sums up and updates the historical and social landscape of the Muslim minorities, which fall into three groups of unequal size: the Muslims of the Terai (Southern Plains) who form the largest group, the small 'caste' of the bangle-makers of the Western Hills, and thirdly the traders of the Kathmandu Valley around the capital. The latter are, since at least the 19th century, divided into two rival ethnic groups: the Kashmiris, once affluent high status traders, who have been long established in the capital and pose as the leaders of the Nepalese Muslims and the Hindustanis, now styled as Nepalese, who have more recently arrived from Northern India (Hindustan) as petty shopkeepers and artisans.

The alliance of the latter with some Terai Muslims in order to wrest leadership of the Nepalese Muslims from the Kashmiris is the plot around which the present book is

structured. Particularly interesting, in chapter four, is the documentation on the rise and development of Nepali branches of Indian Fundamentalist Hindu organizations (mainly the Shiv Sena) that triggered anti-Muslim and later anti-Christian violence. On the Muslim side, the author identified the Kathmandu valley Hindustani Muslims and the Terai Muslims who allied to engineer the religious and political revival and indicated the fundamentalist organization, to which they belong, the Jama-e-Islami founded by Mawdudi, the presence of which in Nepal is reported for the first time.

There are some research gaps and limitations in the book, for instance, the title is misleading. The book does not deal with Islamic revival in the whole of Nepal, but only with one group of revivalists based in Kathmandu, which aspire to the leadership of all the Muslims. The term 'nation' in the subtitle is – intentionally – ambiguous: it may refer both to Nepal's population as a whole, or to the Muslim community, which is also, called 'nation' in the other sense of religious community. Moreover, the style is very often prolix and repetitive, making the reading difficult and at places boring.

The abundant bibliography tends to concentrate on recent publications, some of which are not relevant, while omitting important older publications such as the book of Frederick H. Gaige (1975, *Regionalism and National Unity in Nepal*, New Delhi) which contains unique detailed information on the Muslims of the Terai and their participation in regional politics.

More generally, Sijapati does not really master the historical and anthropological approaches. Her descriptions remain too vague and unclear. Sijapati uses theoretical and comparative references, which are abundant but not always compatible. When treating any question she usually first describes her findings, and then quotes several authorities or comparative cases without showing clearly how the concepts she borrows from these authors can be used for a coherent analysis of her material. The book thus raises questions about its methodology and its disciplinary inscription. She does not provide any alternative methodology.

She has illustrated Islamic revival in Nepal descriptively. What is the real impact of this revivalist movement in Nepal? It clearly aims at establishing its authority on all the Muslims of the country. However, as even the author admits, it is far from having

succeeded in reaching this objective, its influence being limited to the Kathmandu Valley and Eastern Terai; even there, not all people have adopted the reforms. This is not only a question of geographic extension. The school of thought behind the Kathmandu revival, the Jama'at-i Islami, has its own limitations stemming from its sectarian character. In India, Pakistan or England it has remained a minority in the Muslim community. It can be concluded that it will also remain in a minority among Nepalese Muslims who are still faithful to the traditionalist schools they adhere to, like the Barelwis, the Deobandis and the Ahl-e hadith.

### **Muslim of Nepal**

Shamima Siddika

Gazala Siddika, Kathmandu, 1993

Pages: 359

Siddika is a great Muslim scholar who has carried out comprehensive ethnographic research on the Muslim community in Nepal. Her book *Muslim of Nepal* has 15 chapters. The book is heavy on description, including the historical link between Islam and Nepal. It enlists the Muslim organizations in the country, Muslim livelihood, women and legal issues. The writer has used qualitative methods and qualitative information and presented it in a descriptive manner. The book provides a detailed description on Nepalese Muslims and gives some district-wise information including case studies.

Siddika beautifully presents the migration history of Muslims in Nepal. In addition, the writer mentions how great the importance of education for Muslims is and why Muslims in Nepal are lagging behind in education in comparison to the rest of Nepalese community. Moreover, the author mentions how the poor economic situation creates hurdles among Muslim families to afford to send their children to school and provide them with a modern education. Consequently, their numbers in public or private jobs are comparatively very low. Her major finding is that Nepali Muslims are socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged groups in Nepal. The situation of Muslims has not changed significantly over many years. Therefore, her conclusion and findings are equally relevant in the present context of Nepal.

Her work ends up as little more than documentation because she provides scant analysis. A major weakness in her book is the lack of descriptions of the Nepalese Muslims that could be called sociological or anthropological. She has published a book without cross checking the information at the empirical level.

Siddika does not base her observations on the actual practice of Nepali Muslims. She relates cultural traits not according to the existing social milieu of Muslims living in Nepali hill and plain, but to the Quran and in the process, she confuses what is practiced with what should be practiced. Her presentation is dominated by what may be called a scriptural interpretation at the cost of a sociological-anthropological explanation.

Additionally, her treatment of Islam tends to be unduly apologetic, ascribing all that is good in Islamic practices to the Quran, while what she considers as incorrect practices are explained away as later accretions. Claiming *pardah* to be a Zoroastrian institution is a case in point. In presenting her description of Muslims in Nepal, the author seems to be oblivious to the fact that she is imposing her own version of Islam, apparently orthodox Sunni Islam, on the lay Muslims in Nepal. However, this book is still an important text in terms of understanding the situation of Muslims in Nepal from an historical context.

### **Religious Minorities in Nepal: An Analysis of the State of the Buddhists and Muslims in the Himalayan Kingdom**

Mollica Dastider

Vedams eBooks, New Delhi, 1995

Pages: 128

Dastider is a well-known Indian scholar researching the area of religious minorities in Nepal. She has published many articles and books on Muslims of Nepal. Dastider authored a remarkable comparative study of the mobilization of the Muslim and Buddhist minorities after the 1990 constitutional reform.

Muslim Minority in Nepal is an impressive work of scholarship, which is very valuable for academicians, researchers, students and general readers to understand the situation of minority Muslims in the Hindu-dominated state of Nepal. This book has six chapters, some of which discuss the process of Sanskritisation among the non-Hindu communities of Nepal, the distribution of the Muslim population and its social structures, and the status of Muslims amidst the dominant Hindu caste society. One chapter even tries to draw a parallel between the Buddhist and Muslim self-assertions in the post-Panchayat period. Dastider concludes with a call for a new framework to bind ethnic and religious minorities in the state.

Dastider analyzes the power structure of Nepal in the context of age-old Chhetri-Brahmin domination in a multilingual multiethnic, multireligious but predominantly Hindu society. There has been in Nepal, she argues, a tendency of assimilating the followers of non-Hindu faith in Hinduism for religious and cultural homogeneity. Projecting the process of religious syncretism, she exposes how a closed political system under the all-powerful Monarchy, symbolizing the fusion of the state with the nation, did not let inter-ethnic conflicts to surface on the ground. However, with the advent of multi-party democracy, different Janajati Parties, the Mongoloid communities are demanding recognition of their respective languages and religious rights.

They are challenging the domination of the Brahmins, Chhetris and Newars in the socio-economic power structure of the society. Against this background, Dastider raises crucial questions regarding Sanskritization of ethnic groups, state policies and religious minorities, caste, education and land reforms, and above all, the question of religious minorities.

This book has clear and praise worthy objectives. However, there are some methodological problems. For example, the parallels she draws between the Buddhist and Muslim activism in Nepal are shallow. Compared to Islam, the Nepali state has had a relatively lax attitude towards Buddhism. The state has co-opted Buddhism in the project of creating a distinct Nepali ethos, one that makes Siddhartha Gautam a national icon and another, which forcibly introduces Buddhism as a denomination of Hinduism.

There are, however, no common points of reference with Islam through which it could be co-opted in the creation of a distinctive Nepali nationality.

It is the role of social science to diagnose history, but there is little evidence of this in *Religious Minorities in Nepal*. The text abounds in statements, which are simply ludicrous, and the author clearly under estimates the level of sophistication at which the discourse on religion and ethnicity is taking place in present-day Nepal. Each of Dastider's chapters follows a definite pattern. A description of historical processes based on secondary sources followed by a political commentary of more recent times in journalistic style, ending with a dash of pontification on what the state should and should not do. The occasional insightful interludes present inferences drawn from interviews with key informants who for the most part go unacknowledged.

The reliance on secondary sources written almost exclusively in English is jarring. Out of 97 secondary sources cited in the reference, only one happens to be in Nepali while out of the total 36 articles cited, not even one is in Nepali. The Dastider's narrative is based neither on intensive field-based methods nor on historical archived material. By citing the works of political scientists and overlooking the significant contributions of other disciplinary traditions in studying religious minorities in Nepal, it is not surprising that the author's work has ended up this shallow. Additional, Shamima Siddiqua's book was already out in 1993, and it is intriguing why Dastider has not acknowledged it in her work.

### **2.13.2 Research Reports**

CERID is one of the research centers of Tribhuvan University, which has conducted research continuously from 1997 to 2007 on the education of Muslims in Nepal.

The latest research was conducted in 2007 with the title *Institutional Scope and Need of Mainstream Education in Madrasas and its Autonomy*. The objectives of this study were:

- to find out what the Madrasa organizers think about the autonomy of Madrasas,

- to assess their views about the government provision to register Madrasas as a formal school,
- to assess the capability of Madrasas to run mainstream subjects while maintaining quality.

The study claims that many Madrasas in the country have been teaching mainstream subjects but there is little organization. The inclusion of mainstream subjects in the Madrasas of urban areas is better organized than the Madrasas of rural areas. Madrasas of urban areas are teaching mainstream subjects up to secondary level. There are a sufficient number of teachers for Islamic courses, but they are lacking teachers of mainstream subjects. There are female and non-Muslim teachers in Madrasa, indicating the changing context of Madrasas. They have good building facilities but there is a lack of furniture and hence a need for educational materials.

The response of Muslims towards the government's provision of registering Madrasas as a mainstream school is mixed. They generally welcome the step but they demand a clear-cut policy for registration. They demand a policy ensuring the autonomy of Madrasas.

In the case of autonomy, they demand a statutory provision in the form of Madrasa act guaranteeing its autonomy. They stress that Madrasas are the cultural institution of Muslims and cannot be handed over to the government. Its management should be in the hands of the Muslim community. Since mainstream courses and Islamic education both are full courses, Muslims suggest for the development of an integrated curriculum for Madrasas for balancing the mainstream and Islamic subjects.

They add that the Madrasas are running on the donations given by the Muslim community. This donation cannot be spent on anything other than religious causes; therefore, the government should provide them with financial support in the form of mainstream teachers, books and materials to conduct mainstream courses. They suggest that the government can monitor and supervise these Madrasas after registration. In addition, they demand for the formation a 'Madrasas Board' comprising of Muslim religious leaders and intellectuals.



The study recommends that the Madrasas should be registered as a community school guaranteeing their autonomy. They should be allowed to run under the management of the Muslim community, which incorporates local Muslim leaders, intellectuals. The government should play a role in the formation of such committees. In addition to these, the government should provide financial support to Madrasas in terms of appointment of mainstream subject teachers, textbooks and other materials. An integrated curriculum for Madrasas should be prepared by balancing mainstream courses and Islamic subjects through the joint effort of educators and Muslim religious leaders. The policies for Madrasas should be prepared in consultation with the Muslim community. Madrasa Board should be constituted at a central level to look after the policy related to the Madrasas.

Another study on *Linking the Madrasas with Mainstream Education in Nepal* was conducted by CERID in 2006. The main objectives of this study were to find out curricular, administrative and financial measures for the linkage of Madrasas with mainstream schools.

The major findings of this study were that the Madrasas have sufficient number of teachers for teaching Islamic courses. However, there is a lack of mainstream subject teachers for teaching mainstream subjects like Nepali, English, Mathematics and Science. The physical facilities in Madrasas in terms of furniture, instructional materials are not adequate. Many Madrasas do not have an adequate number of classrooms. The management committees for the Madrasa are not able to incorporate all the sectors of the local Muslim community.

It also reported that there is no written curriculum of Madrasas. Madrasa education is based on some specific books mainly written in Urdu language. Many of these books are published in India. However, these books are not in accordance with the curriculum for Nepalese schools. Madrasa curriculum includes subjects mainly related to Islamic values. Many Madrasas are teaching mainstream subjects such as Nepali, Mathematics and English, however, they are not teaching subjects like as Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education. They have recruited mainstream educated teachers for this purpose. However, the teachings of these subjects are given less emphasis. The

medium of instruction in Madrasas is Urdu, which is different from the mother tongue and local dialect of Muslims of study area. The Madrasa students have to study up to five languages simultaneously.

This study reported the stereotypical causes of low participation of Muslim children in mainstream schools as the previous FRP studies such as lack of religious education, lack of Islamic environment and language of instruction.

This study further reported that Muslims did not find Madrasa education fully relevant to their needs. They admitted that Madrasas are fulfilling the religious and cultural needs but these are unable to link the Muslims with the demands of the modern world; therefore, they are enthusiastic about linking Madrasas with mainstream education. Muslims are also suspicious about the linkage. They are afraid because they think the inclusion can hamper the identity of Madrasas.

Muslims suggested reorganizing the Madrasa Management Committee after linking with mainstream to ensure representation of all sectors of the local Muslim community with a guarantee to its autonomy. The study also suggested the reorganization of the Madrasa curriculum to incorporate subjects like Nepali, Mathematics, English, and Science. It stated that a separate curriculum for Social Studies, Moral Education, Health and Environmental Education should be prepared incorporating Islamic values for mainstreamed Madrasas.

It recommended two types of the curriculum frameworks for mainstream schools and Madrasas incorporating mainstream subjects. For mainstream schools, the provision of 20 percent optional subjects should be utilized to provide the education of religious and Islamic subject along with Urdu. However, for the Madrasas a curriculum incorporating mainstream subjects such as special courses including Social Studies, Environmental Education, Moral Education and Health, should be developed by incorporating Islamic values.

It also recommended that social studies books should be rewritten to make it friendly to Islamic culture and cultures of other ethnic groups. Special textbooks for Madrasas should be developed in Urdu language. Textbooks of mainstream subjects should be

translated in Urdu. A capable Madrasas should be selected as a test case for the implementation of the recommended mainstream course. Furniture for these Madrasas should be arranged. These Madrasas should be recognized as a primary school. The government should appoint at least two mainstream subject teachers to these Madrasas. A Madrasa Board should be constituted at a central level to look after the policy and management of Madrasa education. An elective course should be developed at a central level for the primary schools in Muslim areas, which can provide religious education in mainstream schools. The curriculum for Madrasas should be prepared by a central level incorporating Muslim intellectuals, Muslim religious and social leaders and educators.

CERID conducted a study for BPEP entitled *Social Assessment of Educationally Disadvantaged Group* in 1997. This report considered Muslims as an educationally disadvantaged group along with another seventeen groups. The objectives of this study focused on the specific problems of girls, children of linguistic minorities, shifting population, impoverished groups and remote area dwellers with respect to their enrollment, retention and achievement. It also studied the effectiveness of various educational opportunities that were available to those children and it assessed the demand for different educational opportunities for ensuring effective participation of these children and on the possible strategies for overcoming these constraints.

The study reported that Muslims have a lack of trust in mainstream education. They prefer Madrasa to mainstream schools. There is a social pressure to join Madrasas instead of formal schools; therefore, the enrollment of Muslim children in mainstream schools is low. Although Muslims speak a local language, they prefer education in 'Urdu' their cultural language. Madrasas have educational potentialities of their own. Since Muslims have low trust in mainstream education, their involvement in school matters is low. The study has recommended for building trust regarding school education, providing incentive to poor Muslims, upgrading traditional Madrasa schools and getting them involved in the formal primary school education.

Another study entitled *Enhancing Educational Awareness in the Rural Muslims* was undertaken by CERID in Rauthat and Sunsari districts in 1998. The objectives of this study were to motivate the Muslims in the school system by using important quotes

from their main religious books, the Quran and Hadith, and to motivate Muslim educated people to be an active voice for the education in their community. This study observed positive responses from the community. Nevertheless, they admitted that they find school incompatible to their cultural needs such as a lack of education of their religious books, non-Islamic environment, and a lack of education in Urdu. This study recommended an assessment, motivational campaign, teaching in Urdu, and recognition of Madrasas.

In the FRP studies, *Education of Muslims* has been given priority. Altogether five studies have been conducted prior to this about the education of Muslims. The first study was conducted in 2002, with the title 'Access to Education for Disadvantaged Group'. Muslims were included as the Special Focus Group in this study along with other groups such as Mushar, Tamang, Chepang, Chamar and Tharus (Kamaiya). This study was conducted in Rupandehi district. The objectives of this study were:

- to identify motivating or de-motivating factors that affect the education of special focus group children,
- to identify gaps between different methods of implementation and the procedure adopted by BPEP II in improving the education of a special focus group,
- to provide feedback to the program and suggest improvement measures for promoting the educational participation of the special focus group,

The major finding of this study was that Muslim children prefer to go Madrasas instead of mainstream schools. It was also found that they felt there was a language problem in the classroom because of the language of instruction. Muslim children fared better in the study than children from the other ethnic groups, yet their enrollment was highly discouraging. The aliening factors for Muslims as found in this study were language problems, early marriage of girls, poverty and lack of chance for a job.

This study made no recommendation for a particular disadvantaged group. It gave only general recommendation for all groups. The main recommendations were to launch an educational incentive scheme, mobilize local NGOs and pocket level orientation program for this purpose.

The second FRP Study was conducted by CERID in 2003 entitled *Access of Muslim Children to Education*, which was mainly concerned with the identification of causes of low participation of Muslim children in mainstream education. The goal was to suggest appropriate measures to increase their participation in schooling. The study conducted in Rupandehi district had the following main objectives:

- to identify the causes of low participation of Muslim children in the schools,
- to identify the educational status of Muslims in the sample area, and
- to suggest the ways to increase the educational participation of Muslim children.

This study reported that the economic status of Muslim was very feeble. A majority of the Muslim population (67 percent) were engaged in manual jobs compared with 52 percent of the dependent population. The main causes of their low participation in mainstream schools were a lack of religious education in schools, lack of a culture friendly environment, language of instruction, which was different from their cultural language, Urdu, lack of skill-oriented education in schools and mismatches of the school environment with their culture. It also reported that the incentive program launched in the study area, could not properly reach the targeted people. The major recommendations of this study were registering Madrasas free of cost, managing teacher-Maulvi reciprocity in schools and Madrasas, incentive scheme for Muslim children, and the need for policy decision for mainstreaming the Madrasas.

The third FRP study, entitled *Access of Muslim Children to Education: Phase II*, 2004 pointed out mismatches in school and Madrasa education and environment as the cause of low participation of Muslims in mainstream schools. It raised the issue of a need for an intensive study to find out socio-cultural aspects, which determine Muslim children's participation in schools along with the role of Madrasa and the ways for bridging the gap between mainstream schools and Madrasa. The intention was to find out the extent of Muslim children's participation in school education vis-à-vis their socio-cultural practices and to analyze the contribution of Madrasas towards the education of the Muslim children.

It analyzed the flow of Muslim children in different schooling systems and the curricular structure of Madrasa education. It also suggested strategies to increase

Muslim children's participation in the mainstream schools. According to the main findings of this study, the literacy rate of the Muslims in the study area was 43.8 percent. There was a great contribution of Madrasas in fostering literacy in Urdu language among Muslims. 28.1 percent of Muslims (28.8 percent male and 27.4 percent female) were literate from Madrasa. It reported that 41.2 percent of the total primary school-aged children were studying in Madrasas. Only 18 percent of children of this age group were studying in the mainstream schools (i.e. government and private schools) while 40.7 percent of the total children belonging to this age group were allowed to pass their childhood at home.

According to the study, repetition and dropout rate of Muslim girls was higher than that of Muslim boys, but the girl's promotion rate was lower than the boys'. The ratio of Muslim girls in Madrasas was higher than that in the mainstream schools. Socio-cultural causes affecting participation of Muslim children in education were lack of religious education in the mainstream schools, poor economic background, lack of Islamic environment, different language of instruction and lack of awareness of parents. The lack of gender specific school, absence of female teachers, and prevalence of purdah system and conservative thinking of parents were the added causes behind the low enrollment rate of Muslim children.

The study suggested for inclusion of mainstream courses in Madrasa or vice versa as a means to bridge the gap between these two systems. It also suggested that Madrasas must be registered as an institution of primary education with mainstream school subjects as the main course of their studies. Another suggestion brought forth by the study was to appoint the mainstream subject teacher in Madrasa and a religious teacher in government schools.

### **Conclusion**

Social inequality, discrimination and exclusion are universal phenomena. There are various theoretical perspectives to see the social exclusion and inclusion in the society. Social exclusion/inclusion is a contested and multidimensional concept and fluid in nature as the term is associated with multiple meanings, which differ in time, context, situation and space.

The issues are more applicable in the context of Nepal, which is home to tremendous geographical lingual, religious and cultural diversities. In spite of its fluidity in meaning, the literature on social inclusion and exclusion is expanding in Nepal. The available literature has identified some of the issues such as the lack of access of socially excluded groups to various aspects of social, economic, educational and political spheres. This hinders the development of the state and leads to the socially excluded groups having major social, economic and political grievances, resulting in alienation from the state and from the ruling groups.

The concept of social exclusion or inclusion figured prominently in the policy discourse in France in the mid 1970's and was later adopted by the European Union in the late 1980's as a key concept in social policy and in many instances replaced the concept of poverty.

Social inclusion and exclusion gained prominence in public and development policy discourse in Nepal only when it was included among the four pillars of the Tenth National Plan (2002-2007). Following this plan, social inclusion has become a policy agenda and a national political agenda in the country. The objective of social exclusion has been a mobilizing force among groups that have traditionally been excluded from opportunities and whose access to institutions have been denied them on the basis of their origin, caste, ethnicity, gender and religion. In the national political agenda, social exclusion has been seen as a way of achieving the objective of nation building.

Nepal does not have a long history of modern education; however, various policies, plans and legal frameworks are in place in order to ensure the rights of excluded groups. Consequently, plans, programs and provisions to ensure social inclusion within the school education sector are also in place. The government of Nepal has formed many educational commissions to make decisions about policies regarding education in the past. However, all of those commissions appeared to possess the monolingual, a common culture and common curricula mindset and have not been effective as a result.

The NNEPC (1956) report emphasized the 'one language, one culture and one nation' policy which has been the most durable legacy in the country. This commission legitimized Nepali language and tried to make it inevitable for all primary school

children. The Nepalese education system adopted a policy of national integration based on the formation of a common language and values. ARNEC (1962) recommends for a common national curriculum and Nepali as the medium of instruction.

However, these recommendations could not reflect the real national reality, paying no attention towards heterogeneity and emphasizing homogeneity. Primary education in the mother tongue was adopted as a policy only after the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990.

HLNEC (1998) is the first commission, which gave consideration to the education of backward communities such as low castes, language minorities, caste minorities (Dalits) and the economically underprivileged. It suggested special provisions to increase their access in education, however, these commissions did not address the problems of the Muslim minority groups of Nepal and it fails to recognize language as a right and a resource.

Although the Nepalese education system and constitution, at present, do not discriminate any one on the basis of origin, caste, religion, race and gender, Muslim education status in the country is a major issue due mainly to the policies brought out and implemented by the state over the past few decades.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) regarded education as one of the fundamental rights of each citizen. The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) has the overarching national goal of poverty reduction and has regarded education as one of the major means of achieving this goal. The Plan has emphasized the need for knowledge building, human resource development and sustained human productivity, gender and social equity, inclusion and empowerment, and economic growth for poverty reduction.

However, equity of access and social inclusion is not only limited to the supply side. It is also about the beneficiaries' ability to access and fully utilize the supplies. The initiatives so far, however, inadequate pay attention to this aspect. The common notion that the supply will automatically create demand does not work unless the consumer is able to use and is convinced about the possible benefits.



Government of Nepal has also made several commitments at the international and national levels in recent years that deal with providing education at both primary and secondary levels. EFA and MDGs have been major agenda items in the educational policies and plans of Nepal. In the last decade, Nepal has made remarkable progress in this regard. However, Muslims and many other minority groups are still lagging behind in terms of access to education.

In the present context, the Interim Constitution of Nepal and the Three Years Interim Plan had been the milestones for social inclusion of minority groups at different levels of government institutions. Effective implementation of these national policies and plans is crucial for inclusive development with adequate scopes for maintaining sustainable peace, development and social harmony in the country.

The background of the page features a large, faint watermark of the University of Kashmir logo. The logo is circular with a purple border. Inside the circle, there is a green tree on the left, a white book at the bottom, and a white torch with a red flame on the right. The text "UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR" is written in a semi-circle at the bottom. There is also text in Urdu and Kashmiri at the top of the circle.

## **CHAPTER 3**

---

# **MUSLIMS OF NEPAL**

## **A SOCIO- HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

This chapter presents a general introduction of the country and an overview of Muslims in Nepal. It also presents their migration history and identity including their social, cultural, economic, political and educational situation from an historical perspective.

### 3.1 General Introduction of Nepal

Nepal is a multiethnic, multilingual, multi religious, multicultural, landlocked, and Himalayan country, which, as per the interim constitution, 2007, is secular and democratic. Surrounded by Tibet, the autonomous province of China to the north and by India from all other directions, Nepal, despite its small size, is diverse in its geography, ecosystem, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Culturally, Nepal is a mosaic of many different cultures, languages and religions. According to the CBS (2001), there are more than 101 castes/ethnic groups in Nepal with ten major caste/ethnic groups occupying 69 percent of the population<sup>1</sup>. In addition, there are 59 indigenous nationalities, 8 religious groups and 92 language groups within the total population of 23,151,423 (Appendix I & II). Given this kind of cultural and linguistic diversity, it is a major problem that there is a centralized national education curriculum with little provision for flexibility and localization and that the language of instruction is Nepali.

---

<sup>1</sup> Chhetri, Hill Brahman, Magar, Tharu, Tamang, Newar, Kami, Yadav, Muslim and Rai Kirati.

Nepal's population is remarkably heterogeneous, comprising of a mix of both Indo-European and Tibeto-Burman ethnic groups and languages, and of various indigenous nationalities and castes, each with its own distinct language and cultural traditions. The national language is Nepali. Nepal is composed of three distinct geographical regions: Mountain, Hill and the Terai.

The mountain region covers 35 percent of the total land of the country with 7.3 percent of the nation's population. The hill region represents 42 percent of the land area with 44.3 percent of the total population, and the Terai region covers 23 percent of the land with 48.4 percent of the population of the country. Life in the mountain region is extreme and vulnerable due to lack of fertile land, conducive climate, transportation facilities and other alternate sources of income. However, the population of both mountain and mid-hill region today largely depends on the Terai for food production.

Administratively, Nepal is divided into 5 Development Regions, 14 Zones, 75 Districts, 3754 Village Development Committees and 58 municipalities. Like the mountain region, people in the Far Western Development Region are comparatively more disadvantaged and less developed than the rest of the country. The Central Development Region and Eastern Development Region are more developed in comparison to other regions in terms of education, transportation and industries due mainly to the protracted leadership of the nation by the politicians from the eastern region.

In Nepal, the majority of people live in hamlets scattered across the country. Though certain areas of Nepal are strongly associated with particular caste /ethnic groups, there is an extensive scattering of various castes/ethnic groups across the country.

Traditionally, the regions of Nepal have been identified by the names of major ethnic communities who inhabited these regions. A large area of the mountain and hill regions of the Eastern Development Region was called the Kirat Pradesh (Kirat Region) as inhabited by indigenous peoples of the Kirat origin such as Limbu, Rai and Yakkha for thousands of years.

The hills of the Western Development Region, where Magar indigenous peoples reside, was traditionally known as Magarant. Likewise, the hills and mountains of the mid and Far Western Development Regions, mainly inhabited by the Khas Chhetries, was called the Khasan region.

Though people from various castes and ethnic groups have migrated to the other parts of Nepal mainly after the unification of the country by King Prithivi Narayan Shah in 1769, their population is still densely concentrated in geographical areas where they have been living for generations.

In present day Nepal, diversified castes and ethnic groups<sup>2</sup> have been residing in different ecological regions of the country. However, according to CBS (1995), the population of Nepal can be classified into the various cultural groups<sup>3</sup> based on their racial and linguistic affinities.

People of Nepal, as mentioned above, racially have various origins including Mongoloid<sup>4</sup>, Caucasian<sup>5</sup>, Dravidian and Proto-Australoid. The Mongoloid and Caucasian mainly reside in hilly regions whereas the other two less populous groups are Dravidian (Jhangad) and Proto-Australoid (Satar) living in the Terai region. The Mongoloid groups, known as non-caste and indigenous nationalities have a more egalitarian society whereas the Aryans have been categorized into various caste groups guided by the concept of hierarchy of low and high, touchable and untouchable and pure and impure.

Religiously, the majority of the population is Hindu (approximately 81 percent) and there are sizeable Buddhist and Islamic populations in Nepal (Figure 3.1). Religiously

<sup>2</sup> Sherpa, Bhote, Hyolmo, Singsawa, Thudam, Dhokpya, Dolpo, Siyar, Byansi and Thakali are residing in the mountain region. The mid-hill region has been resided by Gurung, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Chepang, Raute, Newar, Bahun and the Chhetri. Some of the marginalized, minority peoples such as Danuwar, Raji, Majhi, Kumal, and Bote populate the low altitude valley of the mid-hill regions. The Terai region has been inhabited mainly with the largest population of Tharus including smaller groups of Meche, Dhimal, Satar, Jhangad, Rajbanshi, Musahar, Bahun, Chhetri and Muslims.

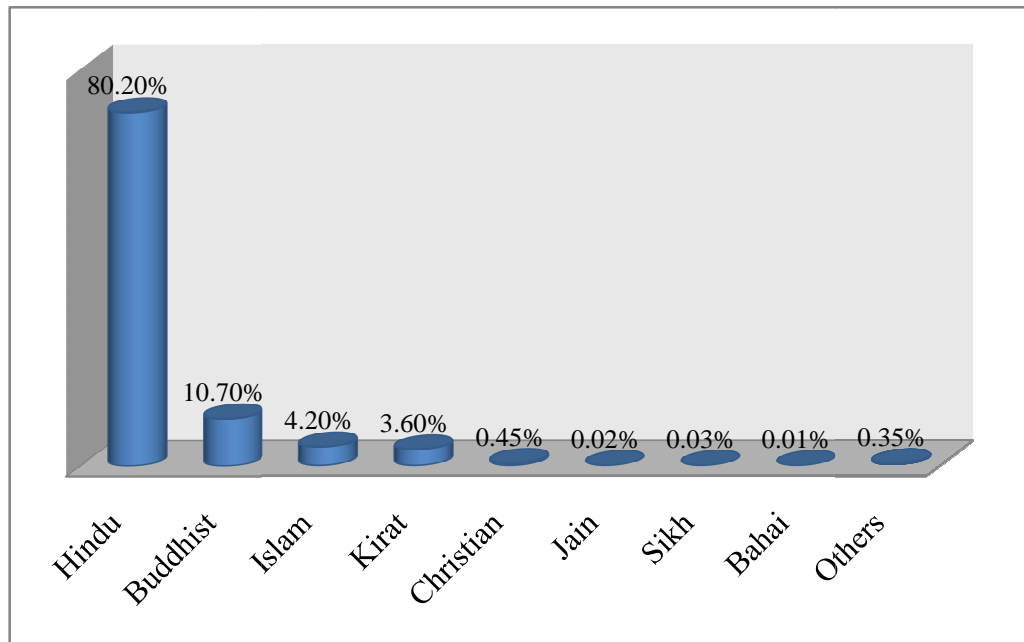
<sup>3</sup> The Parbatiyas or Indo-Nepalese (Bahun, Chhetri, Thakuri, Sanyasi, Kami, Damai and Sarki) The Tibeto-Burman Mongoloid groups (Limbu, Rai, Gurung, Thakali, Tamang, Magar, Sherpa, Sunuwar, Thami, Danuwar and Chepang). The Newars (who claim the Kathmandu Valley as their homeland) and the Castes (Bahun and Chhetri) and tribes (Tharu, Dhimal, Gangai, Satar, Meche, Rajbanshi)

<sup>4</sup> Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Sherpa, Rai, Limbu and Thakali represent the Mongoloid

<sup>5</sup> Bahun, Chhetri, and so-called low castes- Kami, Damai and Sarki represent the Indo-Aryan origin

and culturally, Nepal has a rich history of Buddhist and Hindu integration. There are also small Christian, Jain, Muslim, and Shikh communities in Nepal (Sijapati, 2011).

**Figure 3.1** Religious Groups in Nepal



Source CBS, 2001

Linguistically, there are two major groups, Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan speaking people. However, the Khas Nepali language has been declared as the official national language although there more than 92 languages spoken in the country. The overall literacy rate in the country is 53.7 percent and female literacy rate 39.7 percent. The high-caste people are well educated in comparison to other groups. For instance, the literacy rate of Bahun is 68.4 percent whereas Muslim is 34.7 percent, a minority religious group of Nepal (CBS, 2001)

Politically, hill Brahman-Chhetri and the Newars have a stronghold in national politics, while the indigenous nationalities, Muslims and Madhesis (Terai) have been deprived of the various opportunities of the state. Therefore, regional conflict between Pahade (people from the hill regions) and Madhesi (people from the Terai), and conflict between the ethnic minority groups and high caste people is another remarkable phenomenon existing in the country.

Despite the immense ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity, a significant number of the population has largely been unable to participate in the mainstream development processes because of the exclusionary policies and practices of the state. The dominant groups of Nepal have traditionally enjoyed near-monopoly over the civil and military administration, which have been supported by the centralized state machineries for centuries. The feudal socio-economic and political structures have excluded the general masses of Muslims, indigenous nationalities, Madhesi, women and Dalits from mainstream development. They are under-represented in decision-making processes at all levels and lack proper access to justice and state resources due to deep-rooted exclusionary religious, cultural, educational, economic, and political institutions in Nepal.

As a result of such practices on inequality, the historic ten years People's War (1996-2006) took place in the country. The poor and excluded groups, especially women, Dalits, indigenous peoples, Madhesi and Muslims became the worst victims of the conflict.

In recent years, Nepal witnessed rapid and unprecedented political changes. In 2006, Peoples' Movement II ended the King's direct rule and reinstated the dissolved parliament. The "Comprehensive Peace Agreement" followed this between the Government and the insurgent Communist Party of Nepal- Maoists (CPN-M).

They formed the interim government with the participation of the CPN-M, promulgated the Interim Constitution, 2007, and formally ended the 240-year-old monarchy with the formal declaration of the federal democratic republic of Nepal on 28 May 2008 by the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

Despite these political changes, the Constituent Assembly has failed to make a new constitution in Nepal in its four years in power due to the vain political interests of major political parties such as Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal (UML) Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and Madhesi Forum. On 27 May 2012, the Constituent Assembly got its legal termination and Prime Minister Babu Ram Bhattarai declared the date of new elections to the Constituent Assembly for November 22,

2012. Owing to these political changes, the conflicting situation in the country has subsided and undergone major changes in the past few years.

Despite these positive changes, poverty, injustice and poor governance have persisted in the country. Civil strife and protests accompanied by frequent *bandhs* (closures) and violence are still common features as various sections of the people on the basis of ethnic and geographical diversity demand the recognition and inclusion of their agenda in the new constitution.

Currently, the political situation of Nepal is unstable, which has been the defining feature of the Nepali state during the last two decades. The country is still emerging from the conflict with some aftershocks. In the past five years, Nepalese people have witnessed the signing of a peace agreement between the former Maoist rebels and the state, a new Interim Constitution, the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the abolition of monarchy and declaration of a federal republic, five governments, and the rise of strong ethnic identity movements. The political compact around the new constitution that endorses the devolution of power, social and political inclusion, democratic elections, and political accountability represent an opportunity in this transition. The new constitution is supposed to lead to a major restructuring of the state, as Nepal will adopt federalism as a fundamental principle of governance through the new constitution. As per the plan, elections to national and local levels will take place once the new constitution is promulgated.

The conflict and the prolonged transition to peace and stability have even contributed to a progressive erosion of the effectiveness of some state institutions. For instance, poor law and order is a growing concern, particularly in certain geographic areas. In addition, the conflict raised awareness that the Nepali state had been associated with exclusionary political, social, and economic institutions, which did not reflect the country's diversity. This has led to the rise of identity politics with an increasing demand for state recognition and greater accommodation of diverse social, cultural and ethnic identities.



### 3.2 Migration History of Muslims in Nepal

Nepalese people have a long history of migration. The population of Nepal represents waves of migration from the north and the south at different periods of history. The history of Muslim immigration and settlement in Nepal is not so clear due to sparse and scattered references in literature. Therefore, it is difficult to come to any definite conclusion on the issue of migration of Muslims to Nepal.

Muslims are generally understood to have migrated to Nepal especially from the south in various periods of history due to various reasons. The history of Muslim settlement in Nepal is generally traced back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Bista, 1976; Thapa, 1998; & Sharma, 2004). However, a number of scholars speak about their presence and settlement in Nepal long before this. They refer to some argued trade relations between Nepal and the Arabian countries since 789 A.D., Muslim invasions in Simrongadh by Gayasuddin Tughlaq in 1324 A.D. and the Kathmandu Valley in 1349 A.D by Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas. According to Siddika (1993), the Muslims entered Nepal after the spread of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. The Muslim rule in India had begun in the 13th century and remained up to 1857 when the British came to power. Therefore, the history of Muslim migration in Nepal coincides with the Muslim rule in South Asia.

Nepalese chronicles mention that the first Muslims to settle in Nepal were the Kashmiri traders who came to Nepal during the reign of King Ratna Malla (1448-1520 A.D) (Bista, 1975). The traders who travelled between Kashmir and Lhasa via Kathmandu came to Nepal when Ratna Malla invited them to Kathmandu through his envoy in Lhasa. Kashmiri Muslims were also appointed as scribes for King Ratna Malla to organize the Munshi Khana and to correspond with the Delhi Sultanate (Dastider, 2007).

The second phase of Muslims' arrival in Nepal began at the end of the 17th century when the *chaubise* (twenty four) kings of Nepal's western hills, impressed by the superior skills of the Mughal army in using firearms, invited Muslim artillerists and artisans from India to train their army in manufacturing firearms. The descendants of most of these western hill Muslims came to be known as *churaute* (bangle sellers) as many of them got into that profession, along with farming. Their services to *chaubise*

kings became redundant in lieu of the unification of all principalities under the supreme leadership of the Gorkha King Prithvi Narayan Shah.

However, the most significant wave of Muslims to reach Nepal was the result of the British onslaught of Muslims after the failure of World War I. The migrants included members of Mughal royal families in Delhi and Lucknow besides personalities like Begum Hazrat Mahal, Maulana Sarfaraz Ali Shah, a mufti of the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar who arrived with the entourage of Begum Hazrat Mahal, and took shelter in Kathmandu (Gautam, 1987). The Muslims reached other parts of Terai in Nepal from the border states of India as agricultural laborers especially to till the lands. However, a substantial increase in their population took place when Nepal received some new territories such as Nepalgunj in the western Terai from British India.

The last and final group of Muslims is of Tibetan origin. They arrived mostly after the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1959. At present, about a hundred families of Tibetan Muslims are found in the Kathmandu Valley and most of them are engaged in profitable carpet businesses and are considered more affluent than other Muslim communities (Dastider, 2007). Although this Muslim migration was insignificant in terms of their numbers, it increased the plurality of Muslim community of Nepal on the one hand and augmented the class differences among Muslims on the other. In addition, the migration of Tibetan Muslims offered a new dimension to Muslim plurality because racially and culturally different Muslims became an inseparable part of the larger Muslim community in Nepal for the first time.

The four phases of Muslim migration to Nepal are not directly related to Muslim populations living in the Terai region. After the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814, when the boundaries of southern Nepal and India were clearly marked, a large part of an area near present day Indian states of UP and Bihar, which as a matter of fact, was inhabited by a significant number of Muslims, became the territory of Nepal. As a result, Muslims, who were mainly involved in agricultural work, formed the bulk of the Muslim community in the Terai region. It is interesting to note that the boundaries

between India and Nepal have always been very fuzzy<sup>6</sup>. Even today, people need not get any permit or official documents to visit either country. This arrangement encouraged people from both sides to move freely in the region. The free movement of population later paved a way for a very specific kind of politics.

### 3.3 Muslim Identity in Nepal

The history of Muslim migration in Nepal has produced a sub-identity among the Muslims of Nepal. Based on the origin of their own ancestors and place of their settlement in Nepal, Nepalese Muslims are classified as Kashmiri Muslims and Tibetan Muslims (living in Kathmandu), Churaute (living in the Hills), and Madhesi<sup>7</sup> or Indian Muslims (settled in Terai). None of these sub-identities are associated with the name and symbol of Nepali nationalism; they are rather coined to signify the origin of their birth. As Nepali Muslims of these sub-identity groups are considered aliens, it has its own implication for placing Muslims as a disadvantaged group within Nepal (Hachhethu, 2009).

---

<sup>6</sup> Sudipta Kaviraj's argument is useful here to understand the uniqueness of Mulki Ain. Kaviraj argues that in the pre-colonial India the principle of community construction was different. These communities were 'fuzzy' in two senses: first, the complex sum of different identities, such as caste, village or region, was fuzzy. There was not any overarching identity of a community available to them that could claim to represent all the layers of social bonds of an individual. Second, communities were not enumerated. He points out 'they [members of these fuzzy communities] would not represent themselves as a large universal collective group for the very fact of being one, being involved in some action' (Kaviraj 1997). He argues that colonial modernity provided a clearer self-perception to Indian communities through the processes of statistical counting and spatial mapping. Consequently, it became possible to think of a homogeneous community, the exact numbers of its members and its common interests. It is also true in case of 19th century Nepal. However, lack of direct colonial rule and continuation of monarchy based political system in the 20th century offered a very different form of modern community construction, which I am going to deal with in the next section of this paper.

<sup>7</sup> The term *Madhesh* is used to describe the plains of eastern and central Terai region and the term 'Madhesi' refers to the people living in these plains. The term includes Hindu castes, Muslims and some indigenous ethnic groups mainly Tharus and Limbu. The use of the term 'Madhesh' and 'Madhesi' is a matter of controversy since it acquires a meaning, which has been politicized to assert for a collective identity in the wake of democratic upsurge in Nepal. The 'Madhesis' are defined as non-Pahadis with inferior culture, customs and language in the dominant discourse of Pahadi people in a highly derogative manner. This point also came up during the individual interviews and group discussions that Terai people have been abused by Pahadis. This distinction is further intensified to characterize the non-Nepali or migrated status of Madhesi people since the term 'Madhesh' has been historically originated from a Sanskrit word 'Madhyadesh', which is referred for north Indian region primarily for Bihar and UP (Dahal, 2002). The dominant discourse of Monarchy, Hinduism and the hierarchy of Nepali language has always excluded Madhesis mainly because of their distinct culture and cross-border links. Nepal Sadbhawana Party was the only regional party, which raised the concerns of Madhesis.

The identity problem of Nepali Muslims, perceived as 'outsiders', is also associated with a larger picture of identity problem of Madhesis, people of non-hill origin, who settled in the plains of the Terai districts. The problem of Madhesis, irrespective of their belongingness, Hindus or Muslims are twofold: (a) Pahadi's bias treatment of them as foreigners and creating citizenship problems and (b) encroachment by hill migrants into the Terai lands and resources. The Pahadis' obsession is formed because of ongoing migration from people across the borders of India and cultural affinity of plains Hindus and Muslims with the people living across the borders in India. Before the eradication of malaria in the 1950s, the dominant trend of migration was from the south (India) encouraged by the state policy of farming in the dense forest of Terai.

Later on, unwanted fluxes of people from across the borders continued and the volume of such migration was sometimes very high, particularly after liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and during the 1980 referendum. Consequently, the Pahadi (hilly people) who dominated the administration seemed reluctant to distribute citizenship certificates in the Terai. The Citizenship Act- 1963 was against the non-Nepali speaking population and consequently many Nepali citizens of plains origin either were deprived of citizenship certificates or were made to face much difficulty in acquiring citizenship. The government commission, formed in 1994, reported that 3.5 million people residing in the Terai had been deprived of citizenship status.

The *Muluki Ain*<sup>8</sup> of 1854 was the first codified legal text, which defined the status of various communities and ethnic groups. Thus, pure and impure, natives and foreigners, Parbatiya and Madhesi and various other castes-based social groups in Nepal were given social grading based on their origin and customs. The existing literature on *Muluki Ain* shows that the objective of this codification was to conceptualize the idea of a unified nation in a strictly political and religious sense. However, the nature of this Hindu state was very different from the European nation-states. Mark Gaborieau's study of the Muslims of Nepal, especially in relation to *Muluki Ain*, explains that although the codification of the religious status of different groups provided them a clear placing in the conventional caste ranking, the practices of these castes and sub-castes continued to be governed by their everyday cultural milieu (Gaborieau, 1972).

---

<sup>8</sup> *Muluki Ain* is a country law, promulgated on 5 January 1854.

*Muluki Ain* itself claims that it was a compilation of the *thiti bandej* (referred to as an established social order in the state) issued by various kings of the past. Perhaps for that reason, the conventional sources such as dharma shastra and lok dharma found a very clear expression in *Muluki Ain*. This argument is further elaborated by Andras Hofer's study of *Muluki Ain*. He claims that, on one hand, there was a clear European influence on *Muluki Ain* but at the same time, it was an outcome of some specific Nepalese political practices on the other. In this sense, *Muluki Ain* was a social and cultural text, which simply recorded the beliefs and customs of a ruling class/caste in relation to other social groups. Prithvi Narayan Shah's famous dictum, that Nepal, not India, is the Asali Hindustan (Real homeland of Hindus), could be taken as an important point in this regard.

*Muluki Ain* offers an interesting classification of Muslims. Although Muslims are seen as members of a single caste group, they are classified in two different ways to underline the distinctiveness of each social group in relation to Hindu castes. First, Muslims are defined in terms of touchability and untouchability. In this sense, Muslims were regarded as an impure but touchable caste. However, the Terai and hill Muslims are seen as two different communities and the latter were placed in the lower rank of touchable impure castes. The categorization of native Muslims (*Nepal ka Musalman*) and foreign Muslims (*Pardesi Musalman*) mark the second kind of classification. Foreigner Muslims were ranked in the lower category while the Nepal ka Musalman found a relatively higher rank. The lower placing of foreign Muslims, especially the Kashmiri Muslims, reflects a general approach, which gives preference to the natives. However, this aspect could also be seen as an example of 'outsiders' where a clear distinction is made between the native and foreigner.

It is important to contextualize this process of codification simply to avoid two possible misconceptions. First, the classification of Muslims in *Muluki Ain* does not offer them closed identity rather it recognizes the multiple ways in which Muslim social groups are associated with the existing caste system. Therefore, the argument that *Muluki Ain* is part of the larger project of the Hinduization of Nepal does not help us in understanding the complex structure of this text. Secondly, the process of codification as we pointed out earlier should not be viewed in isolation to the direct and indirect

impacts of British colonialism in India especially when the mighty Mughal Empire was declining.

The presence of the British, a powerful modern political player in the sub-continent, not only posed a serious challenge to the ruling class of Nepal in relation to its geo-political existence but also forced them to search for religious-political legitimacy. *Muluki Ain* could be called an outcome of this search for political distinctiveness. Since the communities were not enumerated at that time, the only possible mode by which legal norms could be codified was to acknowledge the fuzzy and unclear boundaries of social groups.

Representation of Nepal as a Hindu state requires some clarification. Nepal's legal status as a Hindu state could be traced back to the *Muluki Ain*, which as we have seen redefined the social structure of Nepal strictly in terms of the existing Hindu caste system. However, this assertion for 'only Hindu Kingdom' kind of a national identity should also be located in the context of the geo-political processes in South Asian region which took place in the mid-20th century, especially after the partition of sub-continent on the basis of religion.

*Muluki Ain* exercised some sort of power in mapping the customary existence of various groups including Muslims and the nature of this power cannot be understood in terms of modern census-based stratification. That could be a possible reason behind the complex terminology of *Muluki Ain*, which is full of Persian and Sanskrit terms.

The rise of political parties in late 1940's is the second crucial moment, which is inextricably linked to the democratic assertions of the people of Nepal. The constitutional developments that took place in the 1950's and 1960's, especially the establishment of the Panchayat system in Nepal, integrated various social and religious groups in the political processes.

Although no special legal provisions were introduced to protect the rights of various groups, the Panchayat system in a sense, expanded the scope of political participation to some extent. It is important to clarify that these constitutional developments did not touch upon the question of religion of the state in the modern sense though Nepal's

status as a Hindu nation continued to be a defining characteristic of these legal changes. For example, in the 1948 Constitution, Lord Pashupatinath, one of the most revered deities of Nepal whose temple in Kathmandu still enjoys a special status, was mentioned in the preamble. The 1959 and 1962 Constitutions, respectively, very clearly pointed out that the King had to be a Hindu and Nepal was to be a Hindu state. However, the most significant aspect in this regard was the right to religion. The 1962 Constitution allowed the citizens of Nepal, especially the non-Hindu religious communities, to practice their traditional religions. It is important to note here that right to religion was constitutionally recognized for the first time though religious communities, particularly Muslims, had been already practicing their conventional social customary laws before this.

Thus, the end of the Rana regime in 1951 and the establishment of a Monarchy-led multi-party coalition government hardly made any change in the social status of the Muslims. The situation more or less remained the same even after the 1959 promulgation of the constitution and the formation of the democratically elected government with BP Koirala as Prime Minister. In 1960, King Mahendra dismissed this government and introduced the Monarchy-led Panchayat system. He replaced the 1854 country code with a new Code in 1963, which provided an equal citizen status to the Muslims. Although, the new Code allowed Muslims to practice their religion freely, the ban on conversion or dissolution of marriage remained as it was in the 1854 Code. Any attempt to convert people remained a punishable offense with a three-year imprisonment. The King nominated one Muslim in his National Panchayat and there was no restriction on the opening of Madrasas.

Even though the 1963 Code did not alter the social status of the Muslims, it opened a floodgate for the various Islamic groups from across the border to expand their activities in Nepal. With the financial support from the Muslim world, there was a speedy growth of Madrasas and mosques on both sides of 1751 km. Indo-Nepal border, particularly along the Indian states of UP and Bihar.

The end of political discrimination among the citizens on religious grounds prompted 31 Muslim leaders to contest in the first general election in 1991 after the promulgation

of the interim constitution. Five of them were elected including three from Nepali Congress and one each from the Communist Party of Nepal and Sadbhavana Party. Sheikh Idris of Nepali Congress was also included in the cabinet. The sudden rise in the political profile of the Muslims not only boosted the morale of this century old suppressed community but also provided them an opportunity to raise an assertive voice for sharing political and administrative power.

Accordingly, they raised demands like 10 percent reservation in the constituent assembly, seats in Parliament and government holidays during Muslim festivals. Similarly, radical Islamists also became active in spreading their network in the kingdom to assertively fight for their separate identity. Immediately after the promulgation of the interim constitution, the Imam of the Jama Masjid of Kathmandu led a delegation and submitted a 14-point charter of demands to the then Prime Minister, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai.

Although, Muslims were not fully satisfied with the interim constitution because of its Hindu orientation, they had no problem in their socio-political and religious activities. Muslim organizations like *Islami Yuva Sangh*, *Miliate Islamia* and *Itehadul Muslimeen*, which were operating as social and religious organizations became aggressive in challenging their centuries-old subordinate status. This led to communal conflict in some of the Terai regions, where Muslims are in competitive strength.

The Interim Parliament declared Nepal as a secular state on May 18, 2006, which was incorporated in the interim constitution on May 2007. It declares Nepal is an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive, and fully democratic state. However, the Constituent Assembly, which was to approve it, is still deliberating the issues.

### **3.4 Socio-economic and Cultural Perspective**

#### **3.4.1 Muslim Population**

Muslims constitute the most distinct and well-defined minority group in Nepal. Besides their adherence to Islam, their ethno-cultural affiliation too, gives Muslims a distinct identity in a predominantly Hindu-Buddhist set-up. The total Muslim population of



Nepal is 975, 954, which constitutes approximately 4.3 percent of the total population of the country. The Muslim population in Nepal is quite dispersed and mainly concentrated in the outlying areas along the Indian border. Except in the north western districts of Manang, Muslims can be found in all other districts of Nepal (CBS, 2001).

However, a large number of the Muslim population, around 95 percent, lives in the Terai districts of Nepal<sup>9</sup>. The distribution of Muslim population by geographic regions shows the largest number in the Terai and the second largest in the hills<sup>10</sup>, while the smallest number of Muslims is found in the mountain region.

The highest population of Muslims is in Rautahat district while Humla district has the lowest population of Muslim. Seven districts have more than 10 percent population of Muslims whereas eleven districts have less than 10 percent but more than one percent of Muslim population. Eight districts have more than half percent and less than one percent Muslim population while the rest have less than half percent of Muslim population. In Kapilvastu district, Muslim population ranks third in total population of Muslims in the country (Appendix III).

Muslims in Nepalese Terai follow the rites and rituals according to their faith and tradition. They have their distinct religious identity in contrast to the majority group (Hindus). Muslims are divided into two major sects, *Sunnis* and *Shia*. *Sunnis* are divided into four major groups: Hanifi, Shafei, Maliki, Hanbali (traditional), Bareilvi, and Deobandi (modern). Ahl-e-Hadith has emerged as a fifth school of *Sunni* sect. *Shias* are divided into *Athna A'shari*, *Bohra* (Dawoodi) and *Imami* (Bhattacharya, 1973).

Indian Muslims are divided into two major categories based on their origin. The categories are Asharaf (Muslims of Arabic origin) and Gair Asharaf (other caste especially Hindu converts). These categories are only used to express the origin not

---

<sup>9</sup> Rautahat (19.5 percent), Banke (19 percent), Kapilbastu (18.2 percent), Parsa (15.4 percent), Mahotari (13.5 percent), Bara (13.4 percent), Sunsari (11.1 percent), Rupendehi (8.7 percent), Dhanusha (8.4 percent), Saptari (8.4 percent), Sarlahi (7.4 percent), Siraha (7.2 percent), Morang (4.4 percent), Nawalparasi (3.9 percent), Jhapa (3.1 percent) and Bardiya (2.8 percent).

<sup>10</sup> Kathmandu (1.1 percent), Tanahu (1.1 percent), Arghakhanchi (0.9 percent), Gorkha (0.9 percent), Kaski (0.7 percent), Udaypur (0.6 percent), Surkhet (0.4 percent), Makawanpur (0.3 percent) and Lalitpur (0.3 percent).

castes as in the Hindu caste system. This stratification is only limited to inter-group marriages in some instances. The caste system of Hindu design does not prevail among Muslims because they believe that all Muslims can eat from the same utensil and can pray together at the same place.

The majority of Muslims of Nepal are mainly *Sunnis*. They are divided into the religious groups of *Barelvi* and *Deobandi*. The Muslims in Nepal speak local dialects such as Bhojpuri, Maithili and Awadhi beside the national language Nepali but Urdu is their common language both as the medium of instruction in Madrasas and as a link language.

### **3.4.2 Muslims in Human Development Index**

Nepali Muslims are economically marginalized, educationally disadvantaged and socially excluded groups in Nepal. This is because Nepal is largely a Hindu society, the Muslims are a minority group, and they profess Islam as their religion. Similarly, Nepali has long been the only national and official language recognized as a mode of education. However, the mother tongue of the majority Muslims is Awadhi, Maithili and Bhojpuri while Urdu is the medium of instruction in Madrasas. Linguistically, Muslims are a minority group and have their own disadvantage in facing an adverse situation in education, employment and administration. In addition to these facts, the social, economic, and political power of Nepal has long been dominated by hill Brahmins over Madhesi or Terai people.

In Nepal, the major three castes and ethnic groups (Hill Brahman and Chhetri, Newar and Madhesi Brahman) have a higher HDI value (0.6 and above) than that of Dalits and Janajatis, both from the Hills and the Terai. Muslims have an index value of 0.401, lower than that for Dalits (0.424) as a whole, but higher than of the three components of the HDI, education is the most significant driver. This accounts for the wide gap between the Brahman/ Chhetri and other caste/ethnic and religious minority groups (UNDP, 2009).

The Madhesh or Terai is homeland for more than 95 percent Nepali Muslims. Muslims constitute the largest population group in five Terai districts: Rautahat, Bara, Parsa,

Kapilbastu and Banke; however, none of these districts has a high Human Development Index (HDI). In Banke, Muslims constitute the largest group (21%) within the total population of the district, which is in 46th place in the HDI rankings for the 75 districts in the country (NESAC, 1998).

**Table 3.1** Condition of Muslims in Nepal

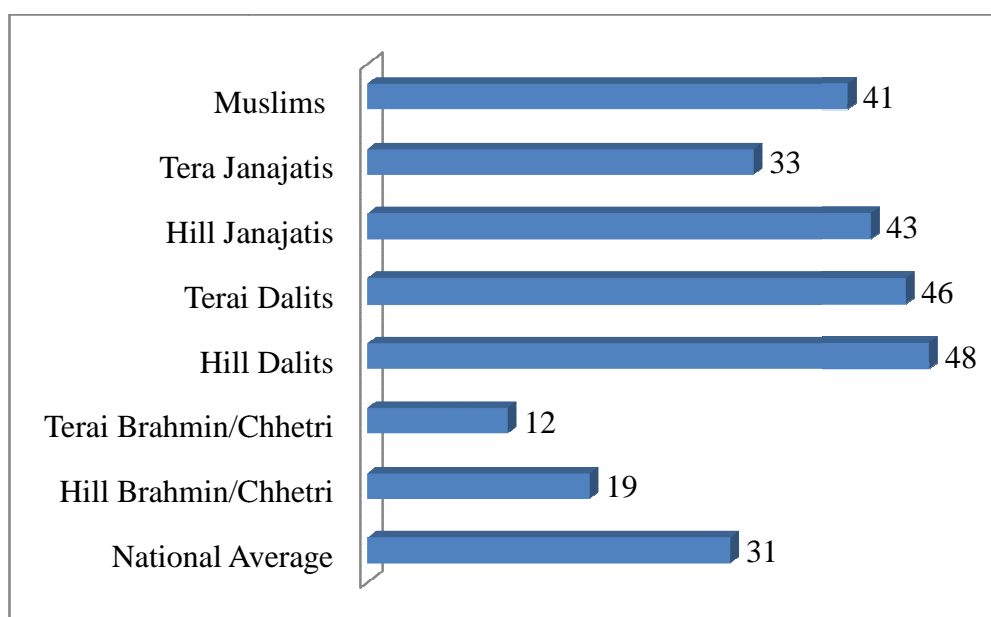
No	Item	Muslim	Nepal
	Human Development Index	0. 509	0. 401
1	Life expectancy	61.0	63.7
2	Per capita income (in US \$)	890	1,597
3	Income index	0.3648	0.4624
4	Adult literacy	30.3	52.4
5	Educational attainment	0.238	0.421
	A. Never attended	62.4	44.0
	B. Grades 1-4	24.7	24.9
	C. Grades 5-10	11.0	24.6
	D. SLC and above	1.7	6.7
	Economic Development		
6	Poverty reduction from 1995 to 2003	2.4	11.0
7	People below poverty line	41	31
8	Average per capita income (NRs)	10,200	15,000
9	Per capita consumption	10,909	15,848
10	Land ownership		
	A. Own land	64.2	70.4
	B. Own + rented	25.7	23.4
	C. Rented only	10.1	6.3
	Representation in National Legislature		
11	Under first experiment in democracy (1959)	1.8	100.0
12	Under party less Panchayat (average)	1.6	100.0
13	Under second experiment in democracy (1990s)	2.3	100.0
14	Under third experiment in democracy (2008)	2.8	100.0

Source UNDP, 2009

By caste and ethnic groups, poverty characterized a lower proportion of Newars and Brahman/Chhetri (14 percent and 18 percent respectively) than of Dalits, Muslims and Hill Janajatis, whose rates hover between 41 percent and 46 percent, significantly higher than the national average of 31 percent. Decreases in poverty rates have also been very unequal, ranging from 6 percent among Muslims to 46 percent between Brahman and Chhetri during the period 1995/96–2003/04 (UNDP, 2009).

Muslims have been facing multiple disadvantages, as a minority religious and linguistic group as well as inhabitants of disadvantaged areas. The marginalization of Muslims is evident by the lower values for Muslims in all the indicators of HDI (life expectancy, income, literacy, etc.), as well as some indicators of economic development and their representation in the national legislature. The national average HDI value is 0.509, compared to an average of 0.401 for Muslims.

**Figure 3.2** Incidence of Poverty by Caste/ethnic Groups (in percentage)



Source UNDP, 2009

Additionally, 41 percent of the Muslim population lives below the poverty line, 10 percent more than the national average of 31 percent (Figure 3.2). Between 1995 and 2003, the reduction in the number of Muslims living below the poverty line was only 2 percent, compared to 11 percent reduction in poverty at the national level overall.

Moreover, the number of Muslim representatives in the national legislature has always been lower than the size of the Muslim population (Table 3.1).

### **3.5 Muslim Society and Culture**

#### **3.5.1 Language**

The Muslims of Nepal generally speak Urdu, Nepali and other local dialects. Urdu is the mother tongue of the majority of the Muslims in Nepal. However, their Urdu is a mixture of local languages. However, almost all of them are bilingual and speak the local languages fluently. In the western Terai, Muslims mainly speak Urdu and Awadhi languages while in other parts of Nepal, they are greatly influenced by the local languages. The mother tongue of the Muslims in Terai depends upon the locality they live in. For example, Muslims of Kapilvastu, Banke, and other western districts speak Awadhi language. Muslims of Bara and Parsa districts speak Bhojpuri, Muslims of Sunsari, Mahottari and other eastern districts speak Maithali language. Unfortunately, there are no census data available on the number of the Urdu speakers. They are listed under other language speakers i.e. among 5.1 percent of all the languages spoken in Nepal (CBS, 2001).

#### **3.5.2 Occupation**

Agriculture is the main occupation of Terai Muslims. However, some of them are also engaged in other occupations, as weavers, vegetable vendors, tailors, bangle sellers, and cobblers. There are also some landless wage earning laborers and a few numbers of landowners and businesspersons. Those who live in the western hills have little land but they support themselves by selling bangles and hair string, which are used by women throughout the hills. Muslims in Kathmandu are mostly traders and shopkeepers, and a few of them have achieved affluence and higher education and have found positions in government offices, university and professional jobs.

#### **3.5.3 Social Ranking among Muslims**

Nepali Muslims are classified into two broad groups in social ranking. The first groups consist of four divisions such as Saiyad, Sheikh, Pathan and Moghul who consider

themselves descendants of the original followers of Mohammad, the founder of Islam, and therefore they consider themselves a superior class. While the second category consists of occupational groups, who later converted to the Islam. They are mostly found in the Terai and western hills. They are Ansari (weavers) Sabji Farash (vegetable vendors), Dhobi (washer-man), Nadd (cotton teasers), Daffali (tassel and bangle sellers) and Mochi (cobblers) in the western hills. However, only two categorization is prevalent, that of Miya and Fakir in which the latter has a lower social position.

Nepali Muslims are mostly *Sunni*<sup>11</sup> and the minority group is *Shia*<sup>12</sup>. These are two important theological groups, not castes as some non- Muslims belief. Globally, Sunnis have four important schools of theology. The Nepali Sunnis follow the Hanafi school of Hazrat Abu Hanifa, a great Islamic theologian. The majority of Nepali Shias are found at Ram Nagar, Bhutaha, Harnanagara, and Kaptanganj and Bhokhra villages of Sunsari district (Bista, 1967).

Marriage ceremony of Muslims from different areas is influenced by local customs and tradition. However, the actual wedding ceremony is rounded off besides *Nikah* by uttering Arabic sermon and a usual *Do-a* (prayer). The Terai Muslims have adopted local language, local dresses, and local culture largely. However, in the religious activities, they have maintained their Islamic tradition.

Nepali Muslims perform religious rites jointly in mosques and other places. For prayer, they either go into the mosque or sit at the mosque premises side by side. They also dine together during religious or social gatherings.

---

<sup>11</sup> *Sunni* literally means one of the paths. A traditionalist this term is generally applied to the larger sect of Muslims who acknowledge the first four *Khalifahs* to have been the rightful successors of holy prophet, and who receive six authentic books of tradition of hilly prophet, and who belong to one of the four schools of jurisprudence found by imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Ash-shafi, Imam Malik, on Imam Ahmed Ibn Hambal.

<sup>12</sup> The theological group *Shieh* literally means followers. They are the followers of Hazrat Ali, the fourth *Khalifah* of Islam. The Shiah maintain that Hazrat Ali was the first legitimate Imam or successor, to the holy prophet, and therefore do not accept Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Umar and Hazarat Usman, the first three *Khalifahs* of the Sunni Muslims, as *Khalifahs*. They are also called the *Imamiyachs* because they believe that the Muslim religion consists the true knowledge of Imam and are rightful leaders of the faith. They are also named as the *Isna- ashriyah* or the twelve – followers of twelve Imams.

The Muslims who are able to trace their ancestry back to Arabic, Persian, or Mughal roots claim higher social status. Early converted Muslim also gains higher status than those who converted at a later stage and have a less social divisions and stratifications. However, all can dine on a same table. They can change their occupations and can make social relations with higher-class families after improving their economic conditions. Their worship place is common. They have a freedom to trade, occupation and craftsmanship.

### 3.6 Education

Educationally, Muslims are a distinctly disadvantaged and excluded groups in Nepal. In the context of Nepal, there are huge disparities in educational attainments in the country. Educational inequality persists in literacy rates across all regions, castes and ethnic groups and by gender. Three layers of exclusion continue: exclusion because of remoteness leading to low access to schools; exclusion because of caste and ethnicity and exclusion because of gender. However, the inequality is higher in the Terai/Madhesi group than the Mountain/Hill group (Table 3.2).

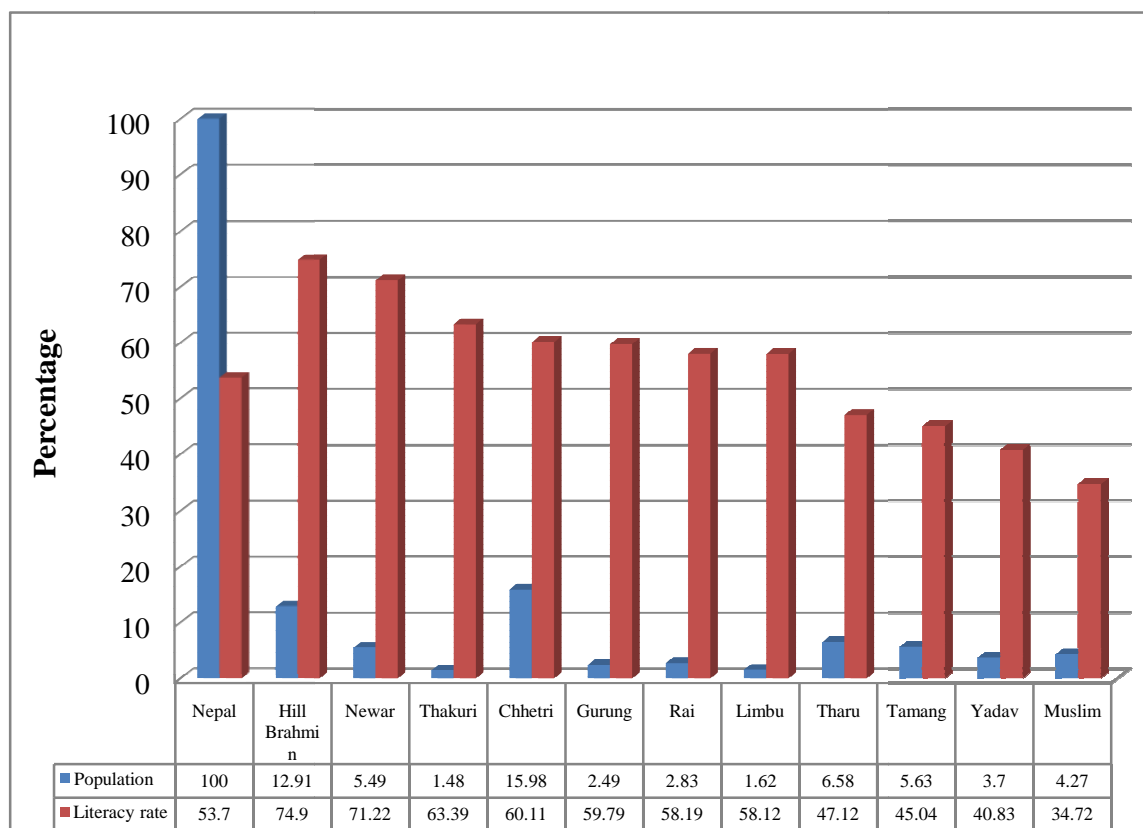
**Table 3.2** Differentials in Educational Attainment by Gender, Caste/ethnicity (in percentage)

Caste/ethnicity	Literacy Rate		Secondary or Higher level education Attainment	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
All Nepalese	54.5	81	29.3	53.5
All Brahman/Chhetri	68.6	92.8	44.4	75.4
Hill Brahman	82.1	96.9	59.5	86.5
Hill Chhetri	59.4	90	34	67.1
Madhesi Brahman/Chhetri	82.5	93.9	61.6	90.1
Madhesi other Castes	24.2	72	12.1	44.5
Madhesi Dalit	17.2	48.5	5.2	19.2
All Dalits	34.8	59.9	11.8	23.2
Hill Dalit	46.3	69	16	26.4
Newar	74.6	93.5	46.1	70
All Janajatis	56.9	79.6	26.4	45.8
Hill Janajati	60	82.4	29.5	48.1
Terai Janajati	51.5	75.5	20.9	42.7
<b>Muslim</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>61.8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25.5</b>
All Hill/Mountain Groups	63.4	86.9	36.1	60.5
All Terai/Madhesi Groups	35.9	69.9	16	40
Others (unidentified)	62.3	97.4	20.8	75.8

Source UNDP, 2009

Figure 3.3 also indicates that Muslims are one of the least literate groups in the country. The relation between lower educational status and poverty can be easily understood. Their literacy rate is 34.7 percent, which is 19 percent lower than the national literacy rate of 53.7 percent. It is obvious that higher access to education leads towards social, political, and economic inclusion in the nation building process but the Muslims seem to have been left behind in the process.

**Figure 3.3** Literacy Rate among Major Caste/ethnic Groups in Nepal



Source CBS, 2001

FRP study entitled *Access of Muslim Children to Education: Phase II, 2004* has shown that 41.2 percent of the total primary school aged children (6-10 years) of the Muslim community in the study area are studying in Madrasahs. Only 18 percent of this age group is studying the mainstream schools (i.e. Government and private schools). Furthermore, 40.71 percent of the total Muslim children belonging to this age group are not attending any school. The main causes of their low participation in mainstream schools as reported by the study are lack of religious education in the mainstream



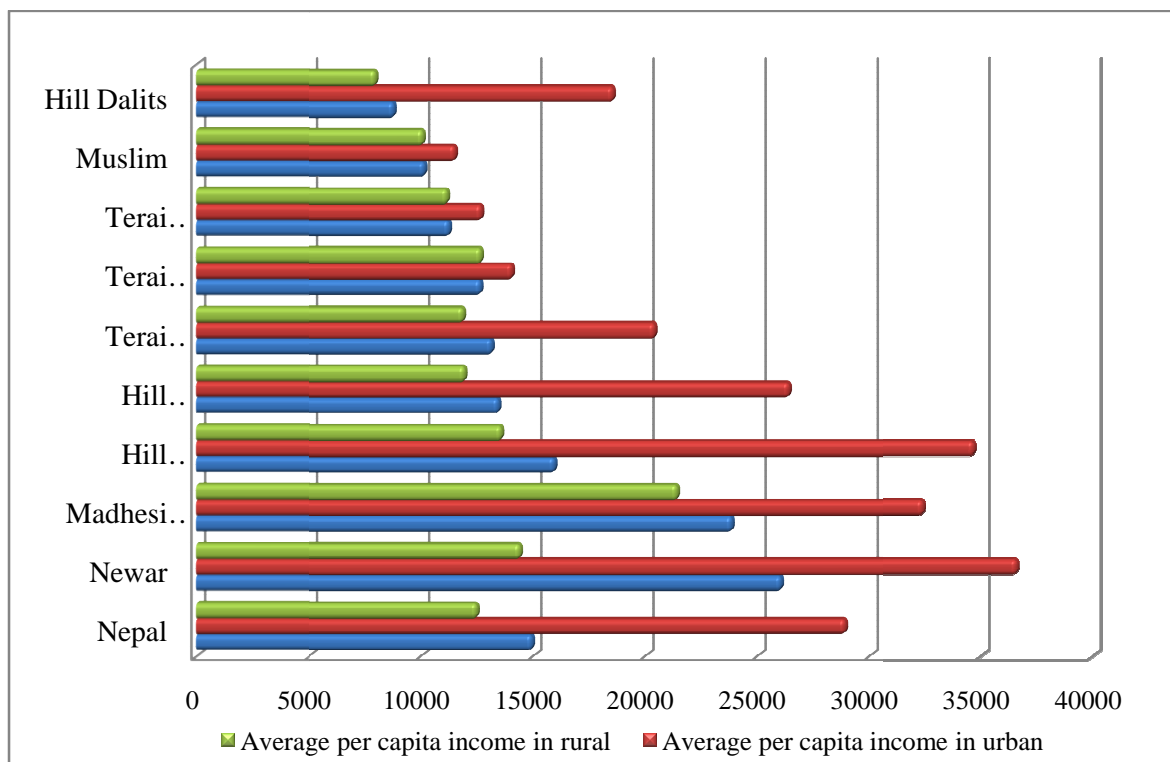
schools, lack of Islamic environment, different language of instruction from local language and lack of awareness among parents, co-education, absence of female teachers, Purdah system, conservative thinking of parents (Parwez, et al., 2004).

Muslims have their own educational institutions named Madrasa and Maktab. The higher flow of Muslim children toward Madrasa in comparison to mainstream schools suggests that Muslims have lower trust towards the majority policies. This study also reports that Madrasas and Maktabas of Nepal are disseminating cultural education. It is found that Muslim parents are not fully satisfied with the education provided by the Madrasas and Maktabas because they do not prepare their children to face the challenges of modern life. They do not properly develop the knowledge and skills needed to be a well-functioning member of the Nepalese society.

As a result, most of the parents simply send their offspring to these institutions for a cultural and religious education. Despite these complains they still prefer to send their children to these institutions rather than to mainstream schools. This can be considered as an alarming situation because it could lead to the disintegration of Muslims from the national mainstream. It would further increase their social exclusion, which might lead to the segregation of this community from the national mainstream.

### **3.7 Per Capita Income**

As reported by DFID and the World Bank (2005) Muslims in Nepal are one of the poorest groups in Nepal compared to the national average of the country.

**Figure 3.4** Average Per Capita Income by Caste/ethnic Groups in Nepal (in NRs)

Source DFID and the World Bank, 2005

Figure 3.4 shows the poor economic condition of Muslims in Nepal. In the Nepalese context, they are not only lagging behind the national per capita income, they are also the second poorest ethnic groups in Nepal, only superseding the Dalits in Nepalese hills.

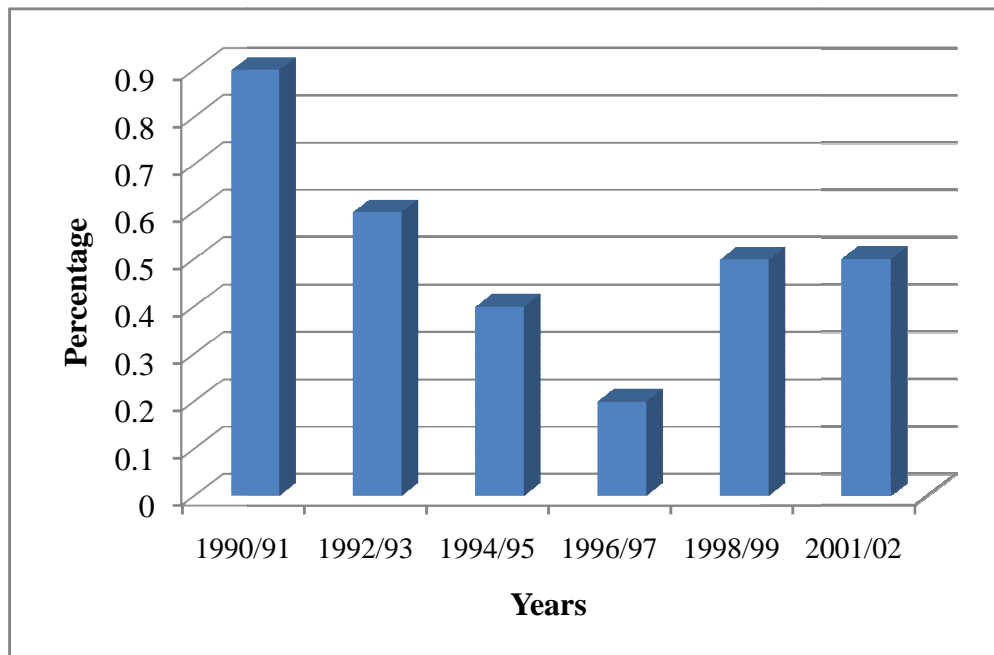
This information related to the political and economic exclusion of Muslims suggests that Muslims of Nepal are a distinctly excluded group, who need to be included in the mainstream development of the country. This could be possible by increasing their access to education, which will ultimately increase their access to job opportunities, political leadership, and different walks of social life thus promoting their inclusion in the social, economic, and political spheres and in the nation building process at large.

### 3.8 Representation in Civil Service

Muslims in Nepal can be considered as a socially excluded group because of their lower access to education, bureaucracy, politics and policy making bodies.

They are amongst the poorest groups in Nepal. UNDP (2004) has reported that Muslims have a relatively low share in positions related to decision-making. This report also reveals a lower share of Muslims in bureaucracy in comparison to their population in the country.

**Figure 3.5** Share of Muslims in third Class Gazette Officer



Source UNDP, 2004

Figure 3.5 distinctly shows the poor representation of Muslims in third class gazetted officers in comparison to their population in the country. The ordinance on Social Inclusion, 2009 has made public service inclusive. This ordinance provided reservation of 45 percent posts of civil service to women, Janajatis (Indigenous nationalities), Madhesis, Dalits, people with disabilities and residents of backward regions while filling vacant posts through free competition. A formula is in place to distribute the above-mentioned 45 percent reservation quotas as 33 percent to women, 27 percent to Janajatis, 22 percent to Madhesis, 9 percent to Dalits, 5 percent to person with disabilities and 4 percent to people of backward regions. Similarly, the 12th amendment of the Nepal Police Regulation issued on 8 November 2008 has also prepared a formula for the distribution of reservation quotas as 32 percent to indigenous minorities, 22 percent to Madhesis, 15 percent to Dalits, 20 percent to women, and 5 percent to the people from backward regions. However, there is no targeted reservation for Muslims

in civil service and the police force as other groups (UNDP, 2009). Therefore, their representation in the civil service is still negligible in number.

### **3.9 Political Representation**

With the establishment of a multi-party democratic system in the country, all social groups are encouraged to participate in the mainstream political process. Like others, Nepalese Muslims have joined the various political parties. Despite this, their representation in politics is still nominal. Historically, they have been excluded from politics because of their restricted access to posts related to political power. Their access to political power has been judged based on their share in the National Assembly.

Dastider (2007) reported that some Muslims had access to political power in historical periods. During the Malla period, few Muslims had occupied the post of courtiers and counselors. According to Aryal and Dhungyal (1975) there was a presence of Muslim courtiers during the rule of Bhaskar Malla, in the early 18th century.

Real evidence of the political participation of any group in political power can be judged based on their representation in democratic political institutions in which their representation is decided by the electoral process. In this sense, the access of Muslims in political power can be judged only after the beginning of election practice in Nepal in the 1950's. Nepal experienced many political changes after this period.

However, electoral process continued relatively unchanged during this period in various ways. Analysis of documents shows that Muslims had enjoyed a better position in the first parliament, which was elected after the General Elections 1959. Out of the total 109 parliament members, two persons (1.8 percent) were from Muslim communities in the House of Representatives (Gage, 1975)

Parliament was dissolved after the political step of King Mahendra in 1959, which ended the multiparty parliamentary system and started the party-less Panchayat system in the country, placing the king at the peak of supreme power. The situation created a slump in relation to the access of Muslims in parliament. During the Panchayat period, there was only one (0.8 percent) Muslim representative out of the 125 house

representatives in the national assembly named as National Panchayat, which was formed in 1967. The situation of Muslims continually slumped in relation to the representation in the National Panchayat between 1964 and 1979. There were only five (1.4 percent) parliament members from the Muslim community during this period (Rana et al., 2009).

Elections to the National Panchayat were based on an indirect or hierarchical voting system, in which elected bodies at the local level were responsible to elect members to the National Panchayat. Nepalese people exercised their voting rights directly under the adult franchise system to elect the parliamentarians to the National Panchayat under the constitution of Nepal, 1962. In the elections held in 1981, 14 candidates from the Muslim community contested for the post of Member of Parliament. However, only two were elected as national legislators, which was only 1.8 percent in the house excluding nominated representatives (Dastider, 2007).

A Democratic system was restored after the people's movement in 1990 ending the party-less Panchayat system. The situation of Muslim representation in parliamentary elections in 1991 improved slightly. According to the official data, 31 Muslim candidates fought elections in 1991 out of which five Muslim MPs were elected, which was 2.4 percent of the total number of MPs in the House of Representatives? One Muslim was also elected to the Upper House out of 60 legislators (Table 3.3).

In fact, Muslims occupied some political posts such as a Cabinet Minister and leader of the Lower House of the Parliament for the first time. The Nepali Congress and the United Communist Party of Nepal distributed tickets to Muslims as part of their larger mobilization drive. These political parties also encouraged Muslims to form various socio-political pressure groups. This development later paved the way for the establishment of Muslim wings in almost all the major political parties.

**Table 3.3** Political Representation by Caste/ethnicity (in percentage)

Caste/ethnicity	Population	House of Representatives of 205 seats			Constituent Assembly	
		1991	1994	1999	No	Percent
Hill high caste	30.8	56	63	60	200	33.3
Hill ethnic	28.5	24	18	20	159	26.5
Madhesi caste	14.8	9	11	14	123	20.4
Madhesi ethnic	8.7	9	7	5	53	8.8
<b>Muslim</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Dalit	12.9	0.5	–	–	48	7.9
Total	–	–	–	–	601	100
Women	50	3	3	6	197	33.77

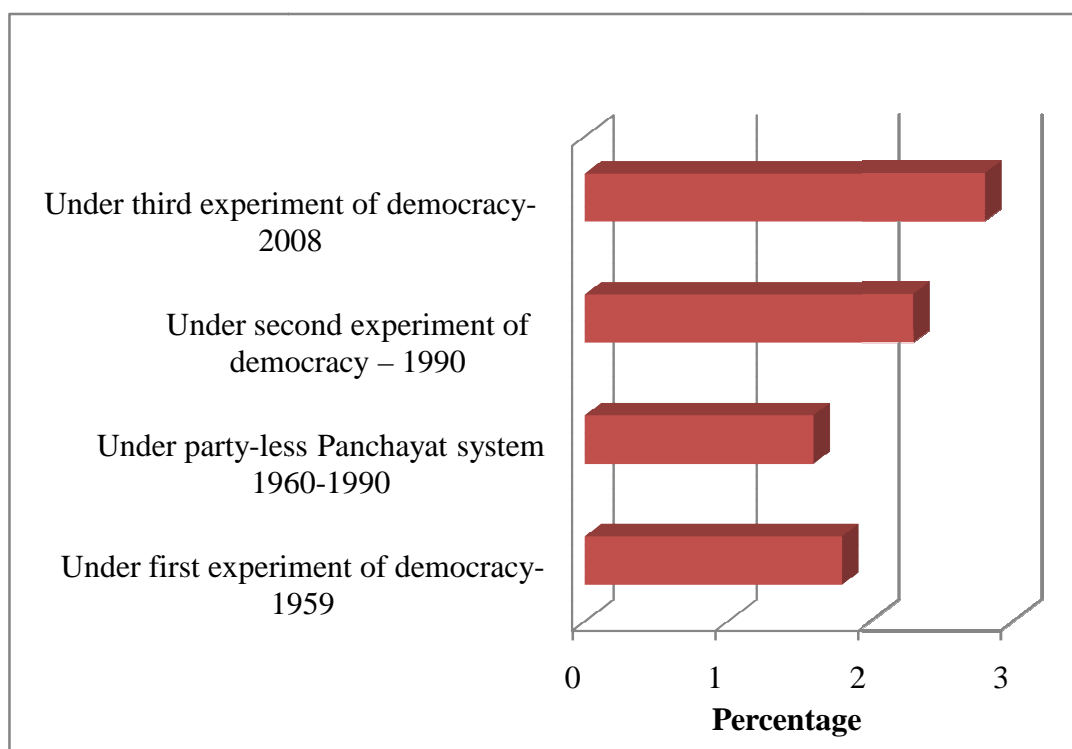
Source SIRF, SNV Nepal, 2010

However, the situations in the assembly elections 1993 and 1998 were less impressive in terms of Muslim representation in the assembly as there were only four (1.95 percent) Muslim members out of the 205 parliamentarians in 1993. In the 1998 assembly, the number of Muslim representatives decreased and remained at two (0.97 percent) in the parliament of the same size.

The popular movement in 2006 laid foundations for the Interim Constitution of 2007, which expressed its commitment to forming a Constituent Assembly for formulating a new constitution for the state. The preamble of this constitution guaranteed the basic rights of the Nepali people to frame a constitution for themselves and to participate in the free and impartial elections of the Constituent Assembly in a fear-free environment. The constitution of 1990 adopted a plural electoral system in which the candidate of an electoral constituency, securing a majority of the votes, was considered elected under a First-pass-the-post (FPTP) system. In contrary, the Interim Constitution adopted a mixed form of electoral system where both FPTP and Proportional Representative (PR) systems were implemented to select legislators. The winning candidates in the PR system were decided by the proportion of votes secured by political parties in the entire country (Election Commission, 2007).

It is believed that the FPTP system does not provide sufficient opportunity to express representation in a national assembly to small political parties, minorities, various castes, and ethnic groups. Therefore, the mixed system was adopted to elect members to the Constituent Assembly, which had the responsibility of formulating a new constitution for the country in the spirit of the popular movement of 2006. In this Constituent Assembly, there are 601 members in which 240 candidates are elected under FPTP system, 335 are elected under PR system and the remaining 26 are nominated from various occupations (UNDP, 2009). There is a provision for a nominating equal ratio of male and female candidates to ensure the representation of females in the assembly.

**Figure 3.6** Muslims Representation in National Legislature



Source UNDP, 2009

There is a provision of including 31.2 percent Madhesi, 13 percent Dalits, 37.8 percent from indigenous nationalities, 4 percent from backward regions, and 30.2 percent from other caste groups. This provision is made to ensure the representation of minorities in the Constituent Assembly.

Out of the 240 constituencies under FPTP system, six (2.5 percent) Muslim candidates won elections to the Constituent Assembly. Only 2.98 percent were elected in 335 places under the PR system (Figure 3.6). The proportion of Muslims in the national assembly is the maximum in comparison to other assemblies that were formed in the past (<http://www.election.gov.np>).

In summary, Muslims were not adequately represented in the assembly in the past years. Their share in the national assembly increased only after the popular movement of 2006. Yet their share was not proportional to the percent of their population.

It is evident that Muslims are a minority group in Nepal in terms of their low representation in politics and other decision-making levels. It also shows that the religious background of Muslims, which is quite different from the majority Hindus, was a prevalent cause of their political exclusion.

### **Conclusion**

The historical and social landscape of Muslims in Nepal is characterized by fragmentation and heterogeneity. The major settlement of the Muslim community is located in the Terai districts of the country. Muslims in Nepal are roughly divided into five groups— Kashmiri Muslims, Indian Muslims, Tibetan Muslims, Terai Muslims and hill Muslims in terms of their origin and settlements. Each group has different histories of migration and settlement in Nepal, though these are documented only sparsely and supplemented in some cases by oral histories. As the first Muslim inhabitants of the valley, Kashmiri Muslims have historically been the most influential, keeping close relation with the monarchy, maintaining economic prosperity, and holding prominent political positions. Later migrations of Muslims from the Terai, particularly after 1857, resulted in significant populations of Muslims in the country by the beginning of the modern period from 1952 onwards.

Muslims are one of the highly disadvantaged, marginalized, excluded minority groups with distinct religious and cultural identities in Nepal. Historically, they have been excluded from social, economical, educational and political institutions. Muslims are one of the least literate groups, with a low Human Poverty Index in Nepal. Muslim



literacy rate is 34.7 percent, which is far below the national average of 53.7 percent and the poverty index of Nepalese Muslims is 0.239 against the national poverty index of 0.325. Likewise, 41 percent Muslims live below the poverty line compared with a national average of 31 percent and 40.4 percent of Muslims are landless in Nepal. The average life expectancy of Muslims is just 52.2 years. These indicators clearly show their exclusion from the different spheres of society.

The low literacy, high poverty and low social status of Muslims means that they face higher barriers in accessing services, taking advantage of economic opportunities and participating fully as responsible citizens of a democratic state. Historically, Muslims have been excluded from the education, government jobs, health services, politics and other decision-making institutions of the state.

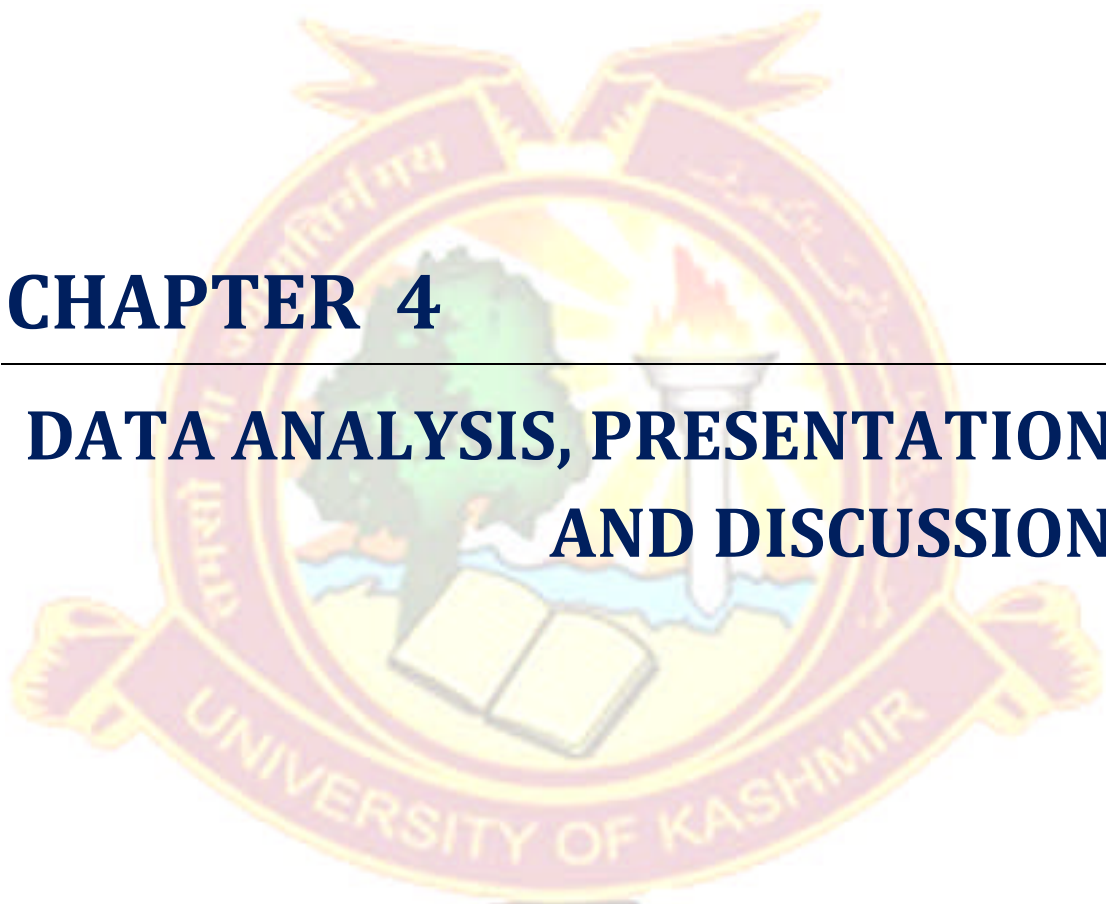
The findings presented in this chapter also suggest that power relations have not changed significantly since the restoration of democracy in 1990. Although human development has improved at the aggregate level, the gap between the advantaged regions or caste/ethnic groups and the disadvantaged is either widening or remains constant. Thus, Muslims who have had lower levels of human development for generations, continue to suffer today. Moreover, the level of human development of women is still less than that of men, and the women still lack fair access to opportunities and resources. However, after the people's movement of 2006 and the introduction of the Interim Constitution (2007), the share of Muslims in politics has slightly increased though it does not proportionate to their population percentage.

The information and data related to education, economic and political exclusion of Muslims suggest that Muslims of Nepal are a distinctly excluded group. To bring them into the mainstream development processes and achieve the national goals of the MDGs (towards an inclusive state) more efforts and initiatives need to be taken by increasing their access to education, which will ultimately increase their access to job opportunities, political leadership and different walks of social and state life.

## **CHAPTER 4**

---

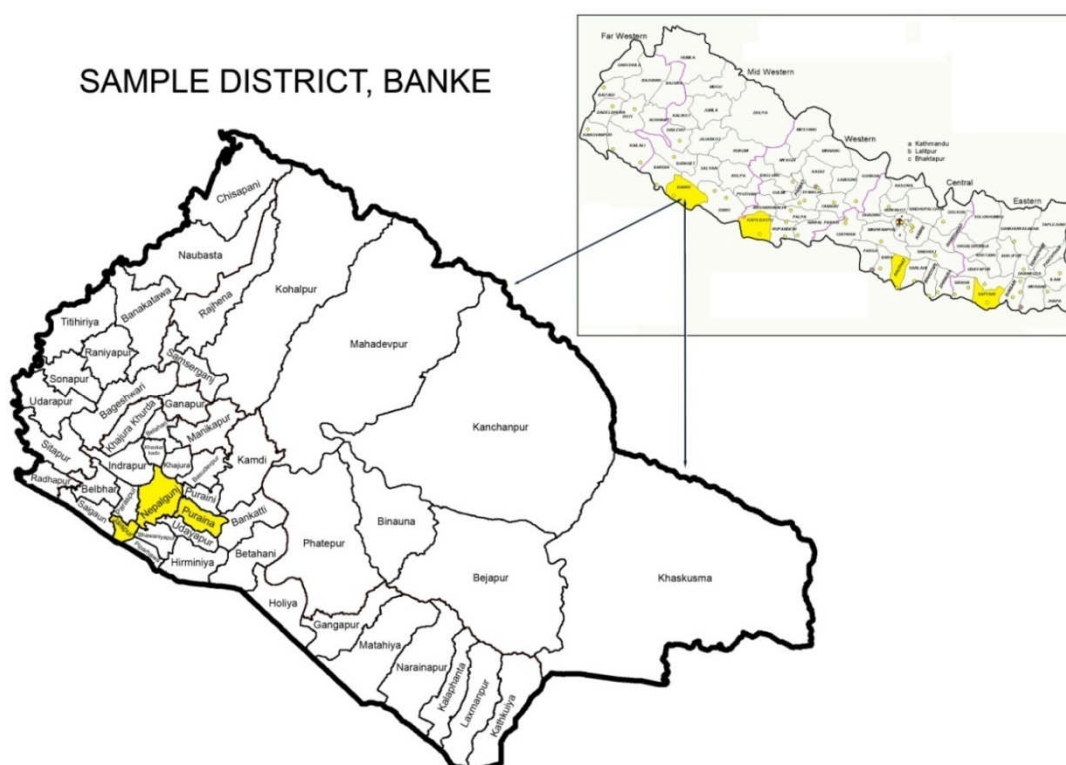
# **DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**



This chapter provides a real picture of Muslims in Nepal based on the empirical data. This chapter is divided into seven broad sections. The first section presents a brief introduction of the study area. The second section discusses the socio-economic and educational situation of Muslims. The third section discusses the situation of social and political participation of Muslims in the study area. The fourth section analyses the Madrasa education and its relevance among the Muslim communities. The fifth section presents the causes of lower participation of Muslims in mainstream education. Socio-economic and educational situations of Indian Muslims are analyzed and presented in section six. In the final section, a comparative analysis between Nepali and Indian Muslims on the basis of social, economic and education condition is presented.

#### **4.1 Introduction of the Study Area: Banke District**

Banke district is located between 81. 29'-82. 8' in the east and 27.51'. -28. 20' north in the Mid-Western Development Region of Nepal. The district is predominantly rural, with the exception of the Nepalganj and Kohalpur areas. The district Bahraich of Uttar Pradesh, India is in its south and Surkhet, Dang-Deukhuri and Bardiya are in north, east and west respectively (Manandhar, 1998:57). The district has 46 Village Development Committees (VDCs), 1 municipality and 3 electoral constituencies. There are 480 government and 65 private schools, six government colleges and 31 private colleges, as well as 16 health posts (CBS, 2001).



The total literacy rate of the Banke district is 57.8 percent. This district covers 2,336 sq. km. and the total population is 3, 85,840 (CBS, 2001). There are 488 government schools, 68 Madrasas, 3 campuses, 2 nursing campuses, 3 technical colleges, and 1 medical college in the district.

According to caste/ethnic distribution, the combined Muslim population is highest in this district, which constitutes 21.1 percent out of the total district population. Other groups present include Tharu, 16 percent, Magar, 13 percent, Chhetri, 12 percent, Hill Brahman, 6 percent, Yadav, 4 percent, Terai Dalit, 3 percent, and Kurmi, 3 percent. Linguistically, 44.2 percent of the people speak Awadhi, 35.1 percent Nepali and 15.0 percent Tharu. There are 88,013 families in Banke, out of which 51.4 percent are engaged in agriculture and 1.6 percent are landless.

By religion, Hindus constitute a majority group of 78 percent, followed by Muslim 19 percent, Buddhist 2 percent and other small religious groups namely Christian and Sikh.

Ecologically, the landscape of the Banke district constitutes 49 percent plains land, 48 percent Siwalik and 3percent high hills. According to land use distribution of the

district, agricultural land covers 25 percent, pastureland 1 percent, forest 71 percent and others 3 percent. Out of the total 58, 976 hectares of agricultural land, 87 percent lands are cultivated and 33 percent of the total agricultural land is irrigated. Distribution of farm size per household is 0.93 hectares. Per capita food production is 3,929 calories. The figure of employment to the population of working age is 53 percent. The percentage share of females in the non-agriculture sector is 17 percent. Nearly half of the total households in Banke district have electricity and possess a radio. Other facilities available are drinking water (93percent), toilet 52 percent, and telephone 10 percent (ISRC, 2007 cited in Hachhethu, 2009).

#### **4.2 Socio-economic and Educational Condition of Muslims in Nepal**

The Socio-economic condition is an important development indicator of any community and nation. Socio-economic status attainment refers to the achievement of a person's relative position of education, occupation and income within that particular social system.

In society, social institutions are functionally interrelated and interdependent. They have correlation between each other. Ownership of physical assets (especially land) and human capital (especially education) not only affects employment opportunities but also determines occupational patterns. Restricted access to these assets may force workers to remain at the lower end of the labor market hierarchy. Employment, education and investments in physical assets interact dynamically. It has been argued that the positive impact of education crucially depends upon the existence of market (employment) opportunities. Without economic returns to education provided in the form of a higher probability of getting employment or earning a higher income, investment in human capital formation will not occur. Similarly, while ownership of physical capital creates opportunities for employment, growth in employment generates resources for new capital formation.

This section presents the socio-economic and educational conditions of Muslims in the study area within the framework of the ongoing demographic transition. In addition, this section analyzes how family income, parent's education and occupation, their religion and culture affect child education.

### 4.2.1 Population Composition of Respondents

Out of the total 350 respondents, 90.9 percent were males and 9.1 percent were females (Table 4.1). It was found that usually Muslims do not allow their females to interact with an outsider. Because of this reason, the majority of the respondents were males

While considering the age structure of respondents by sex, a majority (94 percent) were between the age of 15-59, which is considered the economically active population. The data show that the proportion of elderly Muslims lower (5.1 percent) compared with 6 percent of the total population of the country.

**Table 4.1** Social and Demographic Composition of the Respondents

		<b>Male</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Sex		318	90.9	32	9.1	350	100
Age group	0-14	3	100	-	-	3	0.9
	15-59	300	91.2	29	8.8	329	94.0
	60 +	15	83.3	3	16.7	18	5.1
	Total	318	90.9	32	9.1	350	100
Mother tongue	Urdu	4		-		4	1.1
	Awadhi	314		32		346	98.9
	Total	318		32		350	
Religion	Islam	318	100	32	100	100	100
Marital Status	Married	291	83.1	27	7.8	318	90.9
	Unmarried	15	4.2	-		15	4.2
	Widow/ Widower	12	3.4	5	1.5	17	4.9
	Total	318	90.7	32	9.3	350	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

### 4.2.2 Religion and Mother Tongue

Both mother tongue and religion reflects not only the cultural identity of a group of people in question but also the politics of language and the concept of a secular state. An absolute majority of Muslims in the sample in Banke district are Awadhi language speakers and followers of Islam. Very few Muslims, those who teach in the Madrasas as Maulana and Maulvis, speak Urdu as their mother tongue. Most of these Urdu speaking Maulanas come from various states of India particularly from UP and Bihar. Of course, Urdu is the mode of education in Madrasas throughout the country and it is a *lingua franca* among the Muslims residing in different linguistic zones. However, Muslims have adopted the dominant language of the respective region as well. For instance, Muslims residing in eastern Terai from Sarlahi district use Maithali; for those living in the central Terai (Bara, Parsa and Rautahat) Bhojpuri is their mother tongue; Muslims of Hills and Kathmandu valley speak Nepali language and Muslims residing in west Terai from Rupandehi district speak Awadhi. More recently, Muslim assertion for a separate identity different from other Madhesi is associated with the Urdu language. For Muslims, to be associated with Urdu language is also a matter of pride and prestige (Hachhethu, 2009).

Muslims who speak only Urdu, follow the practices and customs in conformity to their religion, and have not, until now made any serious and continuous efforts to identify themselves with the mainstream politics, thus becoming naturally isolated. Their whole lives begin to revolve around the Urdu language and Islam. Muslims who have, for various, learned or taken up Nepali as one of their languages have entered into better socio-economic relations than those who haven't. They are, naturally less apprehensive of each other and understand each other better than those for whom language is a barrier.

In terms of religion, Muslim are a minority group in Nepal. Religion plays a vital role in society with respect to maintaining social solidarity and integration as mentioned by Durkheim. Religion is a way of life among Muslims and religiously, Muslims are a highly integrated group in the world.

The mother tongue as an ethnic attribute should be looked at in terms of human capital, an ethnic attribute<sup>1</sup> and the identity of an individual person or of an individual community or group. Identity, in the local context, can be seen as representation of a group or community. Muslims in Nepal tend to identify themselves not as individual persons but as representative of their community or group. Ethnic attributes are crucial for family rituals and religious functions, which have contributed significantly to keeping their languages alive. Therefore, the mother tongue education needs to be implemented in the mainstream schools to enhance human capital and the capability of Muslims. This right is ensured by the constitution of Nepal. The Interim Constitution, 2007, article 17 provides education and cultural right to all its citizens without discrimination. It ensures that each community shall have the right to basic education in their mother tongue and every citizen shall have the right to free education from the State up to secondary level. The Ministry of Education in Nepal has already developed MLE Implementation Guidelines in 2010 and it has accepted MLE as a part of the education system of Nepal.

#### **4.2.3 Economic Condition**

The economic status of a group is generally measured by their possession of material wealth and possession of regular jobs. Their houses, household assets, land and production is a kind of gauge to generally assess the material wealth of the people concerned. Absence of Job opportunities and lack of means of productive engagement of people comprising an active working age population has been a common feature of Nepali national life. Hence, a majority of these people live at a subsistence level or even below. Income poverty therefore remains one of the crucial indicators of pauperization of the people. Besides the traditional occupation, the economic activities of the people in Banke are strictly limited. Very few Muslims engage in government services. Some Muslims are found working in NGOs and INGOs. Normally, Muslims are excluded from government services because of their low education. Though there are not any visible or constitutional restraints for Muslims to enter into government jobs, Muslims for various reasons, including their low education and very low preference for

---

<sup>1</sup> This concept was introduced in 1980 by Vaillancourt when he put forward a model that distinguishes between the mother tongue, seen as an ethnic attribute and a form of human capital, and other languages known by an individual, solely defined as an element of human capital (Grin, 1990).



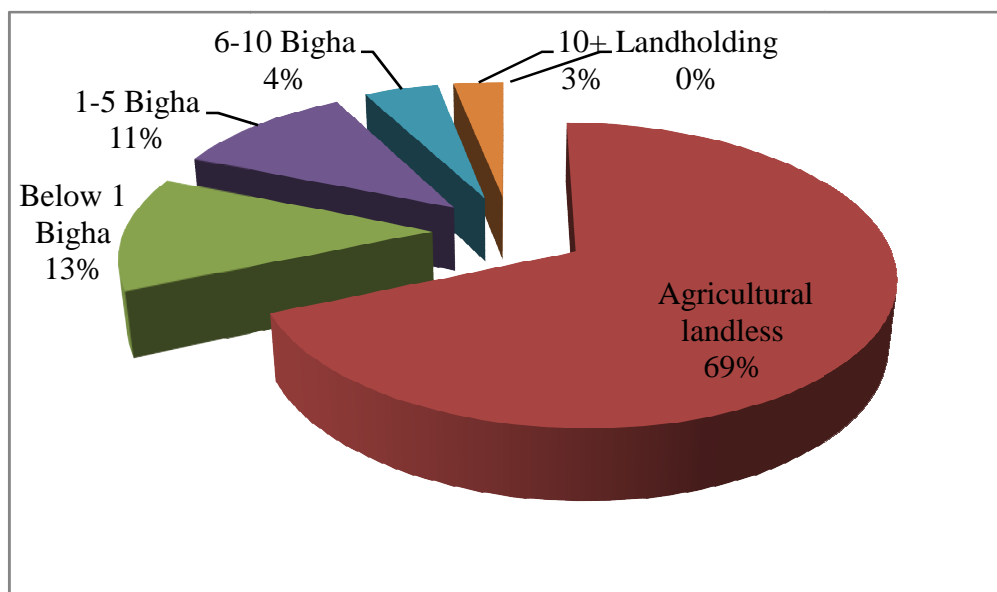
female education, miss the opportunities to benefit from government services. Moreover, out of ignorance and dogmatic thinking some jobs have become taboo for Muslims. Similarly, very few are engaged in big trade and business activities.

The economic condition of Muslims of Banke district is assessed on the basis of their productive activities and engagement in various occupations. The section below discusses the landholding pattern, house ownership, occupation, source of income and expenditure to reflect the level of economic status among Muslims. The intention here is not only to show the existing economic conditions of Muslims but also to reflect on the degree of economic marginality and deprivation of education and occupation.

#### **4.2.3.1 Land Holding**

Land is the one of the main means of production, sources of income and mode of livelihood for people and plays a very important role in Nepali society as a whole. In Nepal, almost 80 percent of people depend on agriculture for their livelihood.

Muslims are one of the most highly marginalized groups in Nepal. The majority of Muslims are landless and economically they are one of the poorest groups with the exception of Dalits. At the national level, 41 percent of the Muslim population lives below the poverty line as compared with the national average of 31 percent. The economically backward position of Nepali Muslims is clearly reflected in the findings of this study. Among the Muslims, out of the total almost 69 percent have no agricultural land at all and 12 percent owned less than 1 Bigha of land, which is not sufficient for livelihood. Only 4 percent of families have more than 10 Bigha land in the study area, suggesting that very few Muslims are relatively comfortable in terms of land holding (Figure 4.1 and Table 4.2).

**Figure 4.1** Land Holding Situation of Muslims

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

Table 4.2 shows that almost all the surveyed Muslims have their own house but a majority of do not have agricultural land. Most Muslims live in the Terai region, which is one of the major paddy production areas of Nepal, yet they do not have sufficient agricultural land for farming. Due to this, they are involved in wage labor, small trade, carpenters, masons, butchers, sweepers, barbers and mechanics as a means of livelihood.

**Table 4.2** Average Land and House Holding Situation of Muslims

	Average holding	No of families	Percent
Agricultural land holding	Landless	240	69
	0-1 bigha	44	13
	1-5 bigha	39	11
	5-10 bigha	16	5
	10+	11	3
	Total	350	100
Houses	Yes	345	98.6
	No	5	1.2
	Total	350	100
Types of houses	Cemented	55	15.7
	Wooden	33	9.4
	Tin	45	12.9
	Mud and hay	217	62.0
	Total	350	100
No of stories	One storied	299	85.4
	Two storied	36	10.3
	Three storied	15	4.3
	Total	350	100
House ownership	Self	335	95.7
	Other family members	10	2.9
	Rented	5	1.4
	Total	350	100

Source Field Survey, 2011

#### 4.2.3.2 Ownership of House

Almost all Muslims own a house. Out of the 350 households 345 (98.6 percent) have their own house. Only 1.2 percent, who live in the Nepalgunj municipality and work as butchers did not have a house as a personal belonging. They were living in rented

accommodation. A majority of the Muslims lives in thatched huts/mud houses with some having tiled or zinc roofs.

Further, the respondents were asked about the building materials used in the walls of their house. A majority of the Muslims had walls built out of stone and timber with mud plaster. In other words, it was the mud wall erected in housing construction. During the field survey, the researcher observed that a majority of the village houses were constructed with mud and hay with thatched straw roofs. It was also observed that the majority of the village houses were one storied but there were some 2 to 3 storied houses in the city area and Jaispur VDC of Banke district.

#### **4.2.3.3 Occupation**

Occupation determines the overall social well-being of individuals and families in a society. Generally, the father's occupation determines their child's education and later their occupation as well.

Wage labor is the main occupation of Muslims in the study area. The majority of the Muslims are landless and thus they are relegated to wage labor and other similar occupations. Muslims are generally engaged in construction and agriculture in the Nepalgunj municipality of Banke district. They work as masons, carpenters, plumbers and laborers, earning around Rs. 200 to 400 per day.

**Table 4.3** Distribution of Respondents by Occupation (15 years of age and above)

Occupation	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Student	3	0.9	0	-	3	0.9
Agriculture	26	7.4	5	1.4	31	8.9
Trade/business	71	20.3	-	-	71	20.3
Wage labor	108	30.9	-	-	108	30.9
Rickshaw pullers /Tanga drivers	65	18.6	-	-	65	18.6
Gov. school teacher	5	1.4	-	-	5	1.4
Butcher	35	10.0	-	-	35	10.0
Household chores	-	-	27	7.7	27	7.7
Non occupation	5	1.4	-	-	5	1.4
Total	318	90.9	32	9.1	350	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

Banke district is adjacent the district of Bahraich, India. The distance from the municipality of Nepalgunj to Rupediya market in India is only 7 kilometers. Rupediya is one of the main shopping markets for the Nepalese. The majority of people from Nepalgunj visit this market. Muslims are also involved in legal and illegal border trade due to the price disparity across the border from Muslim community, who are ethnically closer to the bordering Indian Muslim community. They import rice, onion, potato, sugar, cloth and cooking utensils from Rupediya and sell them in Nepalgunj. The majority of Muslim boys are engaged in this business. They earn around 200 to 300 rupees per day.

A sizable number of Muslims have set up a small business like teashops, mobile repair centers, fruit, and meat and cloth shops in the municipality.

A majority of the Kingariyan Muslims are rickshaw pullers and Tanga drivers. They earn around 200 to 500 rupees per day from this occupation. Rickshaw is the main means of income but they are unable to purchase a rickshaw on their own due to poverty and lack of loan facilities for them. Because of their low education, very few Muslims are engaged in government jobs such as a schoolteacher.

#### 4.2.3.4 Crops Production and Food Sufficiency

In the study area, out of 350 households only 110 households have agricultural land. They produced rice, maize, wheat, pulse, buckwheat, potato, oilseeds and sugarcane. Muslims generally live in the Terai (plain) area where temperatures are suitable for rice production. Therefore, rice is the main crop production in the study area followed by wheat, maize and millet. A majority of the Muslims rely on subsistence agriculture, producing crops only for their own consumption.

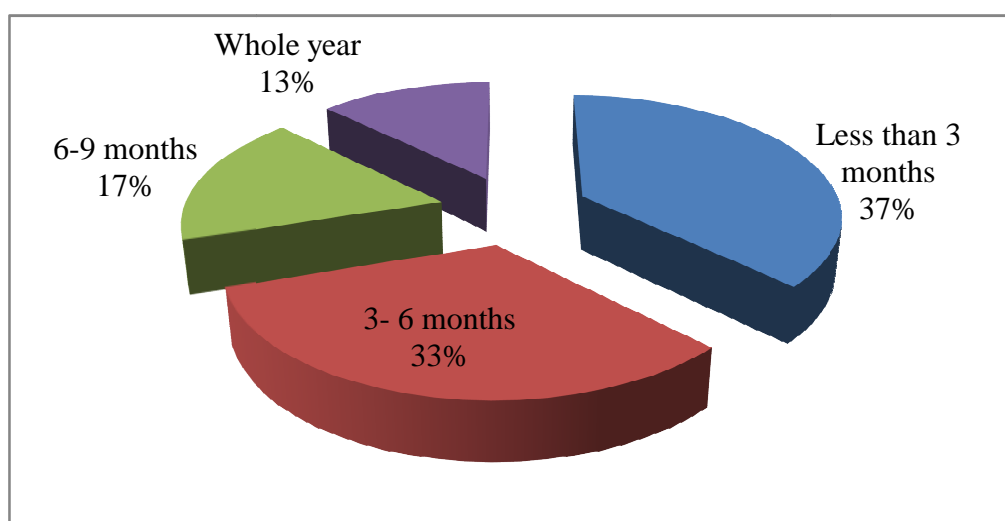
In a real sense, the majority of Muslims are small farmers having less than three Bigha<sup>2</sup> of land per family. Very few Muslims households have more than 10 Bigha land thus the majority of Muslim families are facing the problem of insufficient food from their production.

During fieldwork, a majority of the respondents said that they generally suffer from starvation and they could not produce enough food to satisfy their annual needs. Out of the total, 37.3 percent of respondents said that their production covers the household needs for only 3 months. 17.3 percent of respondents said they could sustain their households for 6- 9 months and only 12.7 percent of respondents reported that their food production is enough for a whole year. Thus, the majority of Muslims have no other way out than either to buy food or find other means to sustain them, which may include heavily borrowing for the purpose.

According to the field survey, the average food sufficiency among Muslims is around 6 months. Borrowing, obtaining help from relatives, buying food from non-farm income are the main livelihood strategies to make up the food deficit.

---

<sup>2</sup> The bigha is a unit of measurement of area of a land, commonly used in Nepal. The precise size of a bigha is about 6,772.63 square meters, 72,900 square feet, or 1.6735 acre. Officially, most measurement of lands uses units of either bigha (in Terai region) or ropani (in Hilly regions). Measurement of area in terms of bigha is 1 bigha = 20 kattha, 1 kattha = 20 dhur (about 338.63 m<sup>2</sup> or 3,645 sq.ft.) 1 dhur = 16.93 m<sup>2</sup> or 182.25 sq.ft.  
1 bigha = 13.31 ropani, 1 ropani = 16 aana (about 508.72 m<sup>2</sup> or 5476 sq. ft.) , 1 aana = 4 paisa (about 31.80 m<sup>2</sup> or 342.25 sq.ft.) , 1 paisa = 4 daam) 7.95 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Figure 4.2** Food Production Sufficiency

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

*Note:* A total of 240 Households have no agricultural land and they are not included in this figure.

#### 4.2.3.5 Source of Income

The economic status of a family can be gauged by analyzing their income and expenditures. The main source of income in Muslim communities is agriculture, trade, and small business and wage labor. The three most important sources of income in the study area are wage labor, trade/business and Rickshaw pulling and Tanga driving. A large number of Muslims are involved in wage labor and fewer in government jobs and the agricultural sector.

**Table 4.4** Average Monthly Income from Different Income Sources

S.N.	Sources of income	Total income (In NRs)	Contribution to their income (in percentage)
1.	Agriculture	120,000	5.8
2.	Trade/business	660,000	31.8
3.	Gov. Service	45,000	2.2
4.	Wage Labor	775,000	37.3
5.	Rickshaw pulling /Tanga driving	475,500	22.9
6.	Total	2,075,500	100.0
7.	Average household income	5930	

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

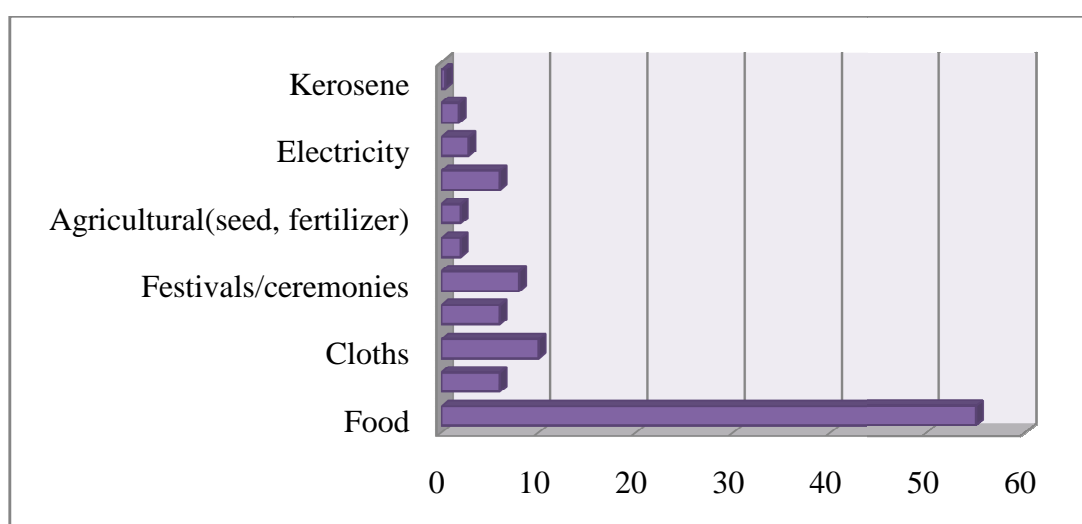
As shown in table 4.4, wage labor contributes 37.3 percent, Trade/business contributes 31.8 percent, Rickshaw driving and Tanga pulling contributes 22.9, and agriculture contributes only 5.8 percent to their income. The Muslim representation in government services is insignificant in number, which contributes only 2.2 percent to their monthly income. A majority of females are engaged in household chores. An average monthly income per household from various sources is Rs. 5,930 and annual income is Rs. 71,160.

#### 4.2.3.6 Expenditure

A large amount of expenditure goes to meet the expenses related to purchasing food items followed by other items like education, cloth, health, festivals/ceremonies, travel, kerosene, electricity and telephone.

An analysis of the expenditures shows that Muslims have either less preference for education or are not able to spend money on it. Out of the total expenses, they spend only about 7 percent of their income on education. Almost 50 percent of the Muslims in the study area sent their children to Madrasa where they get free education. However, some Madrasas take a nominal amount of money as fees.

**Figure 4.3** An Annual Household Expenditure of Muslims (in percentage)



Source Field Survey, 2011



#### 4.2.4 Health and Drinking Water Facility

Availability and use of health facilities in a community or settlement are important indicators of social development of a place. Every village of considerable size and population in Nepal is now provided with a health facility. As recently as 15 years ago, Muslims in general and particularly the women ,hardly ever visited a health post/centre and generally consulted an elder or villager who claimed to have experience with curing the sick through folk medicines or spiritual powers. Now the situation has improved significantly. Members of the community claim to visit and benefit from the health facilities and there is virtually no preference for allopathic medicines.

The Three Year Interim Plan (TYIP) aims to improve the livelihood of Muslim communities by increasing their access to social and economic resources and in all levels of state structures on a proportional basis. In addition, the strategies in the Plan include social and economic transformation of the community through eliminating the constraints present thereof, implement need-based specially targeted programs, adopt positive discrimination measures in health, education, social services and public services. Adopting a policy to preserve the language and culture of the Muslim community and institutional development of Muslim organizations are further policy measures.

As a result, the situation has changed dramatically in the municipalities of Jaispur and Nepalgunj. Both married male and female Muslims have been using temporary female planning contraceptives. They reported that vomiting, diarrhea, tuberculosis, dry cough, and skin related diseases are common in the study area.

The respondents were also asked about their access to health services provided at time of need. Almost all households responded positively in this case. However, they were not satisfied with the service of health post. They indicated that there are insufficient medicines and a lack of proper check-up facilities because of insufficient numbers of health assistants and health workers. The health post staff also agreed on this issue. They provide free medicine, check-up facilities for minor diseases as well as surgery. However, in case there are major problems like a fracture, Tuberculosis, Aids, or cancer, patients are referred to the district health post and hospital.

The lack of proper drinking water facilities in a majority of Muslim villages in particular is the main cause of certain skin and other related diseases among the population. Most people use tube well water, which is generally found to be contaminated. The water pipes run for a short period only and are restricted to a small area.

#### **4.2.5 Education**

Education is a fundamental human capital and one of the most important indicators of the Socio-economic status of a person and development of people, communities and the nation as a whole. Education plays a significant role in the dissemination of modern attitudes, values, approaches and a rational outlook. Access to educational institutions with an acceptable level of education is directly related to the process of inclusion/exclusion. The educational level of a society or a community cannot be judged by its literacy rate alone, although it is an important indicator for making a distinction between literate and non-literate. A literate person is not defined on the basis of his/her educational attainment but only on the basis of knowledge of reading or writing of the language.

Thus, it is important to analyze the educational attainment of a population. Educational attainment refers to acquiring education in a systematic way through formal and informal education. There are various levels of education in Nepal like primary, lower secondary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education (bachelor, masters and Ph.D).

By modern standards, the surveyed respondents are characterized by high illiteracy. Of the total respondents, 61.1 percent were illiterate and only 39.9 percent were literate, which is lower than the national literacy rate of 53.7 percent. In the study area, the number of higher-level degree holders is negligible (Table 4.4).

According to Demographic and Health Survey data (2001) attendance of Muslim children in primary<sup>3</sup> and secondary level<sup>4</sup> schools is only 32.1 and 7.9 percent,

---

<sup>3</sup> At the level of the country as a whole, the primary school NAR is 73.5 percent. Children from Brahman, Chhetri and Newar households have the highest NAR values, between 86.8 and 93 percent. The lowest primary school net attendance rates are observed among Muslims (32.1 percent) and Terai

respectively, which is the lowest percentage compared to other castes and ethnic groups.

**Table 4.5** Literacy Rate and Level of Education of Respondents by Sex

		Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Literacy status	Illiterate	185	58.2	29	90.6	214	61.1
	Literate	133	41.8	3	9.4	136	38.9
	Total	318	100	32	100	350	100
Level/standard of education	Primary	55	42.3	2	66.7	58	16.6
	Secondary	51	39.3	1	33.3	51	14.6
	SLC	2	1.5	-	-	2	0.6
	Higher	22	16.9	-	-	22	6.2
	Total	130	100	3	100	133	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

From the gender perspective, among the Muslims there is a wide gender gap in literacy and level of education. Overall, 90.6 percent female respondents were illiterate. (Table 4.5) There were no higher-level educated Muslim women in the study area. These data clearly show that the female literacy rate is lower in comparison to male among Muslims. According to participants of FGDs and Key informant interviews, the main reason for low literacy and low educational attainment in higher education among Muslims is poverty, early marriage and lack of religious education in government schools and lack of proper access to general education.

Additionally, the low literacy rate of Muslim women is due to the prevalence of patriarchy, the customary law of the Muslims, *purdah* system, early marriage, lack of awareness of parents, and lack of girls' school in the Muslim community.

---

dalits (37.5 percent). Hill dalits (primary NAR 73.5 percent are much more likely to attend school than Terai dalits. This difference in school participation can be explained by the fact that dalits from the hill zone of Nepal are more integrated into society and therefore less subject to discrimination than dalits from the southern Terai.

<sup>4</sup> Overall, 30.9 percent of all Nepali children of secondary school age attend secondary school. The pattern of disparity is similar to that at the primary level of the education system. NAR values are highest among children from Newar, Brahman, and Chhetri households, ranging from 44.6 to 52.3 percent. Terai dalits (secondary NAR 7.2 percent) and Muslims (7.9 percent) are least likely to attend secondary school. Similar to the primary level, Hill dalits have a net attendance rate that is twice as high as that of Terai dalits.

### 4.2.6 Population Composition

The breakdown of family members of all surveyed Muslim households according to age and sex is given in table 4.6. The table shows that the average household size is 5.4 persons in the study area, which is higher than the national average of 4.7 persons (CBS, 2011).

**Table 4.6** Population Composition of Family Members by Age and Sex

Age group	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
0-4	77	8.1	85	9.3	162	8.7
5-9	155	16.4	140	15.3	295	15.8
10-14	152	16.0	135	14.7	287	15.3
15- 20	182	19.2	206	22.5	388	20.8
21-40	191	20.1	186	20.3	377	20.2
41-60	147	15.5	126	13.8	273	14.6
60+	44	4.7	39	4.3	83	4.6
Total	948	100.0	917	100.0	1865	100.0

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

In the study area, it was found that the male population is higher than the female population. Around forty-five percent of surveyed Muslim households had dependents because of having children below 14 years (40 percent) and older population 60 years and above (4.6 percent). The economically active population comprised 55.6 percent, which is higher than the national average of 52 percent.

#### 4.2.6.1 Marital Status

Marriage is the one of the main institution of society. The specific system of marriage varies in different communities in Nepal. Religion, occupation, culture, education and country law determine the norms of marriage. In Nepal, child marriage is not legally allowed. However, early marriage is common among the Muslim community.

**Table 4.7** Marital Status of Family Members by Sex

Marital status	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Mean
Married	314	49.1	345	55.5	659	52.3
Unmarried	325	50.9	277	44.5	602	47.7
Total	639	100.0	622	100.0	1261	100.0

Source Field Survey, 2011

#### 4.2.7 Educational Status of Family Members

Education is one of the most important indicators of Socio-economic status of a person and the development of people, communities and the nation as a whole. Access to educational institutions with a satisfactory level of education has a directly related to the process of inclusion/exclusion. One of the important indicators reflecting on the social situation of Muslims is literacy and their educational attainment. According to the 2001 census, nearly 46 percent of the total population of 6 years old and above was illiterate in Nepal. The census further indicates that there was a wide gap in literacy rate by sex, district, geographical region, rural/urban and caste ethnic groups (Dahal, 2009).

**Table 4.8** Education Status of Family Members by Sex (5 years of age and above)

Education Attainment	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Illiterate	316	32.2	339	46.9	655	38.5
Literate	155	15.8	132	18.3	287	16.9
Primary	229	23.4	140	19.4	369	21.7
Secondary	165	16.8	67	9.2	232	13.6
SLC	44	4.5	22	3.0	66	3.9
Intermediate	42	4.3	16	2.2	58	3.4
Graduates and above	29	3.0	7	1.0	36	2.1
Total	980	100	723	100	1703	100

Source Field Survey, 2011

Table 4.8 indicates that among Muslims, the attainment of higher-level education is very low. The total literacy of Muslims in the study area is 61.5 percent, which is higher than the national literacy rate of 53.7 percent. The reason is that Census survey was taken almost 10 years ago and between this period, the literacy rate has increased. This figure shows that the literacy rate of Muslims has improved significantly over the last 10 years. However, government school attendance of Muslim children is still low in the study area but Madrasas play a vital role in educating Muslims in Nepal, which is one of the main reasons for the improvement in Muslim literacy rate.

From a gender perspective, Muslim female children were in a disadvantaged situation compared with their male counterparts. Against some 32.2 percent, boys considered illiterate, 46.9 percent of girls above the age of five remained illiterate. Only 19.4 percent of girls had completed primary level education in comparison to 23.4 percent of boys. In secondary and above SLC level, the percentage was very low. These data clearly show that the female literacy rate is lower in comparison to males among Muslims. In terms of females with a higher education, the number is virtually insignificant. According to the participants of FGDs and Key informant interviews, the main reason behind low literacy and low educational attainment in higher education is poverty. They reported that large a proportion of the economically poor Muslim families send their children to Madrasa only, which is also supported by this case study (Case 1).

#### **Case 1 Government School- A Distant Dream to Poor Muslim Family**

Mohamad, 38, belongs to Kingariya group of Muslim. He married at the age of 18. He has two sons and a daughter. His elder son got married in 1997. In comparison to others, his family is economically poor. He has no land in his name so his whole family works as farm laborer in the village. His family earns only 150 rupees a day, which is not sufficient for their survival. There are both the government run lower secondary school and primary level Madrasa. Majority of the poor families prefer sending their children to Madrasa as it provides free education. His children are class three Madrasa literate. They could not continue their education because of the poverty. Now, his elder son has two sons who also study in the Madrasa in class 3. They are aware of both the Madrasa and modern education and its importance in their life. They also want their children to join the government school but in vain because they have to pay for school uniform, tiffin, stationeries and exam fee there. Therefore, they are not sure if they can match their dreams because of the poverty.

Besides poverty, early marriage, lack of religious education in government schools and lack of necessary facilities for females are also responsible factors for non/low participation of Muslims in mainstream schools. Generally, they have a tradition of marriage between the ages of 14 to 20 years.

The low literacy rate of Muslim women and the higher proportion of dropouts of Muslim girls are clear indications of the dogmatic, gender-biased attitudes of a patriarchal Muslim society. Patriarchy is prevalent among different social and religious groups of Nepal; however, the customary law of Muslim society exploits Muslim women. Polygamy, *purdah* and so-called religious prohibition against family planning are typical problems that Muslim women face. Unlike Hindu women, Muslim women are far behind in education, social mobility and status in society. There are many social taboos in Muslim society. Prohibition for family planning further contributes negatively to the poverty and health of Muslim women. Prohibition for social mobility for Muslim women leads to their self-confinement.

While as in the wealthy and socially elevated classes among Muslims, women have less social mobility and have to observe *purdah* and other restrictions, the women of poorer classes cannot afford to remain restricted in this way. They have to work outside their homes for sustenance. In the case of most of these families, women work alongside their male counterparts.

Because of *purdah* system, Muslim women's representation and participation in the public domain was negligible in comparison with Hindu women.

#### **4.2.8 Education Situation among the School Going Age Children**

Educational status of Muslims is directly proportional to their access to educational institutions in the past as well as in the present. The analysis of the past situation is the main basis for evaluating the impact of opportunities provided in the past such as government policies and programs. For this purpose, the situation of school-aged children in relation to their access to educational institutions was analyzed. The aim was that it would reveal the present situation of Muslims in relation to education and its probable consequences in the near future. For this purpose, the educational status of

Muslim children of school age was analyzed in the study area. Along with their educational status, the trends of their flow into mainstream schools, private school and Madrasas were also studied. The findings related to the educational status of Muslim school-aged children presented below.

#### 4.2.9 Flow of Muslim Children to Different Schooling System

The table 4.9 shows that out of the total of all the Muslim children of school age (6-14 years), only 79.6 percent are studying in any type of school at the time of this study and the remaining 20.4 percent are not studying in any educational institution. Government schools, private schools and Madrasas are all considered as educational institutions in this study.

**Table 4.9** Different Educational Institutions Going Children by Age and Sex

Age group	Government school going			Private school going			Madrasa going			Both going			Not Going		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
5-9	38	26	64	7	3	10	38	18	56	9	11	20	22	19	41
10-14	74	67	141	13	6	19	37	68	105	34	31	65	34	26	60
Total	112	93	205	20	9	29	75	86	161	43	42	85	56	45	101
Percent	54.6	45.4	41.3	69	31	5.9	46.6	53.4	32.5	50.6	49.4	17.1	55.5	44.5	20.4

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

(Note: M= male, F=female, T= total)

A gender-wise analysis shows that 63.4 percent of boys and 54.1 percent of girls are studying in different educational institutions whereas 11.3 percent of boys and 9 percent of girls are still out of school.

The above table indicates the real picture of the flow of Muslim children in educational institutions. Out of the total, a majority of the children, 41.3 percent, are studying in government schools. A large number of children, 32.5 percent are studying in Madrasas, only 17.1 percent are studying in both types of schools and only 5.9 percent are studying in the private schools.



During the field survey, respondents said that economically poor families sent their children to Madrasas only and a majority of the middle class families sent their children to both a government school and Madrasa. Muslims sent their children to Madrasas/Maktabas during the early morning hours for religious education and then for the rest of the day to a mainstream education school.

An economically well-off and educated family of the study area sent their children to a private school. They teach religious education to their children in their home by hiring Maulvis in the morning and evening time. However, after the registration of Madrasas in DEO and introduction of mainstream subjects like English, math and science in Madrasas, a majority of the Muslims have been sending their children only to Madrasas.

From a gender perspective, the flow of Muslim children showed that more boys are out of school than girls were. It also showed that more boys are studying in the mainstream schools than girls (boys 53.6 percent and girls 45.4 percent). However, in comparison to the mainstream schools the Madrasas have more number of female students (54.4 percent) than male (46.6 percent).

The data show that more Muslim boys of 6-15 years of age are not going to school. Parents prefer to send their children to Madrasa rather than the government school. Madrasa education was more preferred for girls than for boys as the Muslims of the area consider jobs for females to be prohibited by Islam. Therefore, among the Muslim community after completion of primary level education girl's dropout rate is very high.

#### **4.2.10 Reasons for Not Going to School and their Engagement Areas**

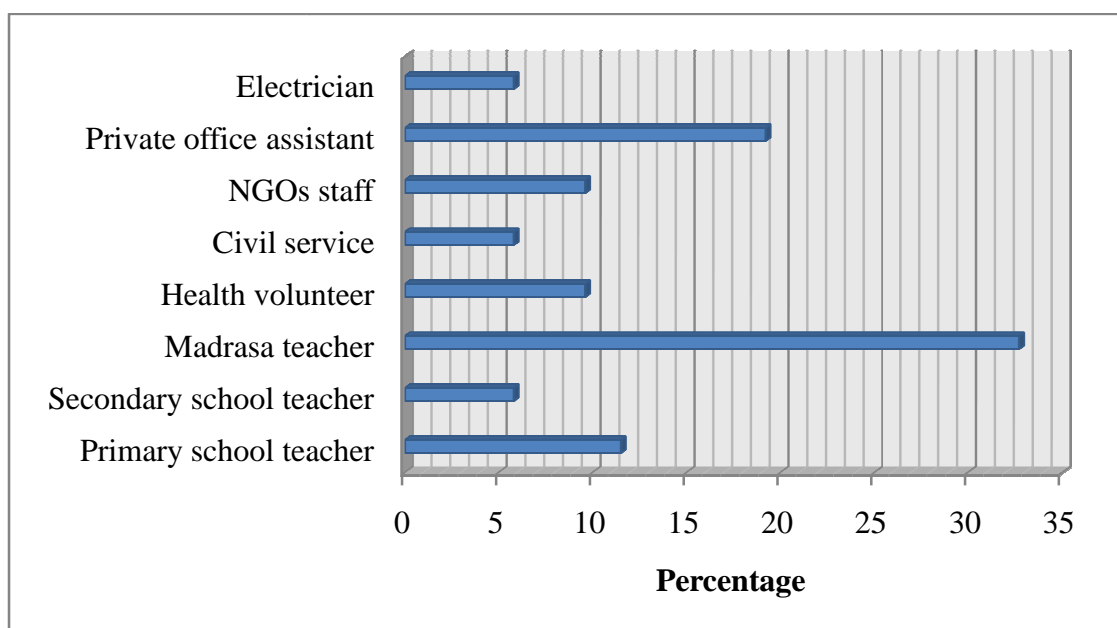
A majority of the Muslims reported that poverty is the main cause for not sending their children to school. Among the Muslims children, school dropout rate is higher in the upper class than the lower class. Because of a lack of mother tongue education and inappropriate school curricula, the failure rate is higher compared with other caste/ethnic group's children.

**Table 4.10** Reasons for Not Going to School and their Engagement Areas

		Male	Female	Total	Percent
Reasons for not going to school	Poverty (unable to meet costs)	19	17	36	35.6
	To support the family	15	12	27	26.7
	Failed in the school	6	6	12	11.9
	Lack of skill education	9	5	14	13.9
	No job opportunity	7	5	12	11.9
	Total	56	45	101	100.0
What are they doing	House work	19	41	60	59.4
	Wage labor	12	2	14	13.9
	Working in India	7		7	6.9
	Disability	2	2	4	4.0
	Trans boarder business	16	-	16	15.8
	Total	56	45	101	100.0

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

The areas of engagement of Muslim children not going to school are also studied and the data show that they are engaged in various areas. There is a gender-based difference in the engagement of such children. A large number of girls are engaged in domestic works, while a large number of boys are engaged in wage earning and cross-board business with India. An equal number of boys and girls did not do any work. Their parents stated that they are not given any responsibility because of their unripe age. Other areas of engagement for boys are butchery, tailoring, carpentry and agriculture. However, the percentage of boys involved in these sectors was very small. Based on the above analysis, majorities of out-of-school children are engaged in domestic work, and wage earning.

**Figure 4.4** Muslims Representation in Different types of Occupation

Source Field Survey, 2011

**Table 4.11** Muslims Representation in Government and Private Jobs

	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Gov. primary school teacher	5	13.9	1	6.2	6	11.5
Secondary school teacher	3	8.3	-	-	3	5.8
Madrasa teacher	12	33.4	5	31.3	17	32.7
Health volunteer	-	-	5	31.3	5	9.6
Civil service	3	8.3	-	-	3	5.8
NGOs staff	3	8.3	2	12.5	5	9.6
Private office assistant	7	19.5	3	18.7	10	19.2
Electrician	3	8.3	-	-	3	5.8
Total	36	100	16	100	52	100.0

Source Field Survey, 2011

#### 4.2.11 Muslims Perception towards Education

The perception of Muslims towards child education varies as per the educational level, economic condition, occupation, age and gender. The majority of the Muslims have a clear perception about the limitations of both streams of education. They said that

mainstream education is important to be able to enter the government jobs but that it does not provide religious and cultural knowledge to the Muslims, which is compulsory for every Muslim.

The Muslim parents/guardians have high regards towards education, in spite of their low participation in education. Almost all key informants of the study areas said that mainstream education is essential for Muslims and it is equally important for males than females. A majority of key informants and household heads held the view that education provides an opportunity to acquire expertise in various fields which is necessary to secure prestigious position in society but they also harbour feelings of discrimination in the job market especially in government jobs. They added that there is no reservation quota for Muslims in government jobs and even after obtaining a degree certificate it is almost impossible to land a government job because of their minority position in the country.

A majority of Muslims are open to girls' education. However, a large majority of the respondents are also in the favour of Madras education for girl's, from where they can learn religious education, which is considered most important for their daily lives. They further clarified that there is no Islamic courses in mainstream schools, which are most essential to every Muslim not just girls. During the household survey and focus group discussions, the participants also demonstrated similar views regarding overall Muslim educational and particularly the education of girls.

Almost all respondents agreed that girls/women are not allowed to work out of the home. So, girls do not need higher level education, only up to primary level is necessary to them. They added that religious education is sufficient to maintain Islamic norms and values in daily practical life.

Intellectuals, government and private service holders and political leaders, however, hold the view that higher education is essential for girls but they agreed that it is not in practice due to the lack of education, early marriage and poverty. The majority of Muslims expects that, first and foremost, education should teach children the Muslim code of conduct, secondly job related skills and training, and thirdly provide a quality education in terms of learning achievement.

### **4.3 Social and Political Participation**

#### **4.3.1 Citizenship**

A Citizenship certificate is the main national identity document of Nepali people and citizenship allows participation in national affairs. An eligible person of 16 years and above is entitled for the citizenship in Nepal. The citizenship certificate is required for job application, to open a bank account, purchase land, and obtain a passport for travel abroad for various purposes. In other words, lacking citizenship is in itself exclusion from the national mainstream development processes.

In the past, the issue of citizenship rights was contested in the Terai region of Nepal. A large number of Madhesis were denied and excluded from the citizenship rights, which was one of the primary reasons for their under-representation in all areas of national life.

However, after the restoration of democracy, the government of Nepal took a big step to provide citizenship to Madhesi people including Muslims. The Citizenship Act of 1964, which was amended in November 2006, paved the way for a large number of Madhesis to acquire Nepali citizenship as it made any person born in Nepal before 15 April 1990 and permanently residing in Nepal, eligible for citizenship. A large number of Madhesis who were denied citizenship were able to get citizenship after the amendment of the Citizenship Act.

In the study area, almost all Muslim households reported that all their eligible family members had obtained citizenship certificate at the time of the survey. These data indicate that eligible persons of Muslim origin are not denied a citizenship certificate and are able to participate in the development processes as Nepali citizens. A few persons, only 0.6 percent, who are too old and physically handicapped, had not applied for a citizenship certificate.

#### **4.3.2 Participation in NGOs and other Community Organizations**

After the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990s, NGOs and INGOs have increasingly influenced Nepali society, however, Muslims were least affected. Among hundreds of NGOs and INGOs working in the surveyed Banke district, there is only a few (e.g. Fatima Foundation, Banke-UNESCO Club, Plan International and Save the Children) concentrating exclusively on the cause of Muslims. Almost all NGOs of

Nepal are dependent on donors' money. Furthermore, NGOs and civil society movement in Nepal is dominated by hill high caste Hindus. Muslims are passive beneficiaries rather than an active agent of their own development who have rights and entitlements (Gautam, 2007, cited in Hachhethu, 2009). Muslims as a group are least affected by NGOs movement which is further evidenced by the findings of this survey.

In the study area, Muslim involvement in NGOs is negligible compared with other groups in the community. Out of the total Muslims involved in NGOs, the majority are male, working as junior staff. One of the major reasons behind their low involvement in NGOs is the lack of higher education degrees and social and religious constraints, especially for females.

Muslim representation in school management committees is satisfactory in the study area. In a majority of the surveyed school management committees, Muslims have a strong hold in and are in key positions as well but female representation is insignificant as compared to their male counterparts (Table 4.12).

However, in the heterogeneous community, Muslim representation is not satisfactory. High caste and other ethnic groups because of their education, active involvement in politics and other social activities in communities hold the key positions.

**Table 4.12** Muslim Participation in NGOs and School Management Committees

Involvement in NGOs	Position	Male	Female	Total	Percent
	Executive board member	3	-	3	27.3
	Program officer	1	-	1	9.1
	Junior staff	5	2	7	63.6
	Total	9	2	11	100
School management committee	Key position (Chairperson, secretary, treasurer)	8	-	8	28.6
	Member	18	2	20	71.4
	Total	25	2	28	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

In Banke, the Fatima Foundation was established by a Muslim woman leader working in the Muslim communities for ensuring their rights and social upliftment in society. Some Muslim females have been working actively in the field of NGOs and politics as well (Case 2).

Disassociation of overwhelming numbers of the Muslim community with NGOs and community organizations is also an indicator of their non-involvement in other spheres of public domain.

**Case 2 Mohana Ansari: A Silver-line Amidst the Cloud**

Mohna Ansari, 52, is a well-known rights activist in Banke and Nepal's only female advocate from the Muslim community. She was appointed as a member of National Women Commission in 2010.

She started her social career as the local journalist at a very young age, reporting mainly on women and children's issues. At the same time, she involved herself with the work of Amnesty International and some women's groups at the regional level that led to her appointment to a member of the Regional Sports Development Committee, Mid Western Region in 1994.

After graduating in law in 2003, Ms Ansari was elected to the member of Nepal Bar Association, Banke. At the same time, she started to oversee the Legal Assistance Program aimed to provide legal assistance to the victimized and needy women and children.

Together with her social works linked with women's organizations and activists, she took up a professional career in 2004 working with national and international organizations in the area of women's rights, empowerment, justice and equality. She has also worked with Action Aid Nepal, Women's Power Development Centre Nepal and UNDP.

Her recent work was a research assignment on the social inclusion of Muslims in Nepal, which she did for the National Inclusion Commission, working in a team of experts appointed by SNV/Nepal.

Ms. Ansari has travelled and worked in more than 40 out of 75 districts across the country including the more remote ones, interacted with the communities living there, and closely observed the status of Nepalese women in all regions. The exposure gave her an opportunity, in her own words, to understand the situation of women in Nepal.

Having received several training on gender and equity, conflict resolution, peace-building and mediation, she graduated from a short course on "Human Rights and Peace Studies" conducted by South Asian Forum For Human Rights (SAFHR) in 2004. Ms Ansari, now, is also a master trainer of gender and equity concerns.

Ms Ansari has always been a person committed to advocating for the rights of women in underprivileged groups/communities. Her work was recognized publicly when "Nepal Weekly" featured her in its 2063 Bhadra 25 edition, reporting about her work in the Muslim community. She has also been featured in documentaries about development issues aired on TV as well as the official website of The Asia Foundation features her under the heading "portraits of leadership". Her articles on women issues have been published by the national dailies such as Kathmandu Post.

She participated in several international forums presenting Nepali women's issues. She participated in international conferences in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and USA. She was nominated as one of the 10 Asian women presented as the "portraits of leadership" in an event organized by The Asia Foundation in USA California in 2008.

Ms Ansari sees her appointment to the National Women Commission as an opportunity to contribute to policy development at the national level for development of economic, social, cultural and human rights of Nepalese women in general and Muslims in particular.

### 4.3.3 Political Participation and Representation

Discrimination in various social, economic and educational areas coexists with low political participation. Political representation is an important socio-economic indicator to measure the condition of a community within a society. Political participation is another indicator of a community empowerment.

In village society, production and consumption are not only the daily activities of people but they also routinely participate in political, civil society organizations and NGO activities. Individuals and family members benefit in several ways once they are involved in these activities and organizations. The process of group mobilization is helping people to overcome some of the institutional barriers of exclusion at the household and community level (Dahal, 2009).

Political representation and association of the Muslims are also low despite a history of political participation in the democracy movement in Nepal as evidenced by 1950-51 anti-Rana revolution. Their lower representation in the power structure of the country is a hard reality from the very beginning. In a democracy, the legislature is the fountainhead of power. Muslims in Nepal are politically powerless in this community. Besides being an alienated group, absence of legislature from any social group in a plural society puts the group at a clear disadvantage. Muslim representation in parliament and state legislature was very low as compared to their population.

Many Muslims contested the first general election of 1959 but none of them succeeded. Two Muslims were, however nominated to the Upper House. The politics of cooption of few influential Muslims was the rule exercised during the Panchayat period (1960-1990). Their position did not change much after the restoration of democracy because their representation in the legislature was two percent in 1959, one percent in 1978, two percent in 1981, two percent in 1990s and three percent in the 2008 CA elections (all proportionally much lower than the Muslim population) (Hachhethu, 2009).

Despite the relatively low level of education, some Muslim males and very few females started taking part in local bodies and national politics since the Panchayat period (1960-1990) and even more so after the onset of democracy in 1990 in Nepal.



In the constituent assembly election of 2008, members from both sexes were elected and selected from the various political parties such as CPN-M, Nepali Congress, CPN (UML), Madhesi Janadhikar Forum and Sadhbhawana Party.

**Table 4.13** Political Participation and Association

	Response	No.	Percent
Do you have voting rights	Yes	344	98.3
	No	6	1.7
	Total	350	100
Do you have any political party membership	Yes	30	8.6
	No	313	89.4
	Do not know	7	2.0
		350	100
Level of political representation	Ward/local	21	75.0
	VDC	5	17.9
	District	2	7.1
	Central	-	-
	Total	28	100
Did you participate in the last political election as voters	Yes	268	76.6
	No	82	23.4
	Total	350	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

In the study area, with the exception of a few old people, almost all have voting rights. Around one third of surveyed Muslims said that they had participated in the last political election for voting. It is encouraging in appearance but not in substance. A majority of the Muslims are indifferent to the madhesh movement even in their own district because of their low economic condition. Party membership of individual respondents was also found to be low. Of the total respondents, only 8.6 percent have party membership in different political parties. Most of the Muslim party members remain confined to the position at the ward and district levels only. Muslim

representation in political decision-making levels is insignificant in number and so is the number of those who participated regularly and frequently.

Political participation and representation has made the people active, mobile and aware of the situation surrounding them. It has also exposed them to both local and national level realities through interactions and debates with different people at different levels. Their association with people from different places had instilled a sense of belonging and binding to the society encouraging them to engage more vigorously in participatory activities.

#### **4.3.4 Gender Role in Household Decision-Making**

One of the crucial indicators of social exclusion is the gender discrimination and treatment of women in social relationships. It is obvious that gender discrimination is high in Nepali society in general and in Terai communities in particular. Gender has become central to some recently published studies on social exclusion (World Bank/DFID 2006 cited in Kumar, 2009).

Household decision making varies in different communities on the basis of their religion, caste, class and gender and also the educational level, occupation and political consciousness of the family members. More importantly, child education depends on household decision-making. Similarly, participation and involvement of family member's in different social, economic and political activities are also influenced by their family decision.

Nepali society is predominantly a patriarchal society where major decisions are most often made by a male and household head. In Muslim society, the household head is the main person responsible for household decision-making. Women have a relatively small role in the household decision-making processes. This situation has been changing due to incremental increases in education and awareness level among the Muslim communities.

**Table 4.14** Gender Role in Household Decision-Making (in percentage)

Areas of decisions	Male	Female	Both	Total
Buying valuable assets	83.1	1.9	15.0	100
Child education	68.7	2.5	28.8	100
Participation in the social activities	83.1	1.3	15.6	100
Selling household product	75.0	6.3	18.7	100
Agricultural activities	83.8	3.1	13.1	100
Buying essential commodities	85.6	1.9	12.5	100
Cultivation	83.8	2.5	13.7	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

The study found that male members of the family dominated almost all levels of decision-making processes in the household. Women's share in household decision-making process is lower as compared to other caste and ethnic groups in Nepal. The decision regarding child education is the leading area in which both male and female make decisions (Table 4.14).

Women, being the most disadvantaged, face diverse problems from their early childhood. A girl child is burdened with domestic chores, thus, discouraged from going to school even though she benefits from scholarships (UNESCO, 2005)

Thus exclusion begins at home as the cultural tradition in which a female child is less preferred. Such tradition is omnipresent among the Muslims whose social condition limits their options. Women in the household are also treated as dependents as very few are the property holders of farmland or domesticated animals.

Although the position of females is generally very low in all sections and at all levels of society in Nepal, the Muslim females are even more underprivileged and lowly placed than their counterparts.

In Nepal, Muslim females have a double disadvantage; being women in a patriarchal society and being a subordinate member of the Muslim family and society, which is most rigid and conservative (Hachhethu, 2009). In the study area, very few Muslim women have land in their own name, which means the ownership of land rests with the male population. The traditional division of male-female work is reflected in women taking more responsibility in collecting drinking water and cooking food for the family. Men are ahead of females in marketing, decision making regarding spending money and establishing a system where males have the first right to take a meal. In some cases, equal partnership between male and female are also recorded. Women's position is better than men in relation to the question of family finances.

Among the Muslim community, males participated more in political organizations, NGOs and community organizations. Participation of Muslim women in the public domain is very low.

The absence or minimal presence of Muslim women in the public domain is an outcome of the restrictions placed on them for mobility. It is also associated with other serious

problems faced by Muslim women, specifically dowry, domestic violence and divorce (Case 3).

Increasingly, mainly because of education and women empowerment, some Muslim women are becoming more involved in politics and other social activities.

### **Case 3 Muslim Woman in Joint Domestic Violence**

Sakina Siddiqui is a 57 years old woman. She has one daughter and a son. While running a small business in Janakpur her husband fell in love with a Chhetri girl. This affair could not go for a long time. Yet when she objected his extramarital relation, she became a victim of joint domestic violence by her husband, mother-in-law and father-in-law. The situation worsened further as her husband married to another girl from Deharadun, India and she was unceremoniously divorced.

As there was no more women empowerment and political consciousness those days, the woman got no justice and neither did any organizations come to help her.

### 4.3.5 Summing up

Based on an examination of literacy, occupation, land holding and food sufficiency as indicators of material and human resource dimension, Muslim communities are in a relatively poor situation. In these communities, illiteracy is high, skills are limited and wage labor and small businesses are the main occupation and source of income.

Economically, Muslims are considered as one of the poorest groups in Nepal. Poverty is one of the major aspects of deprivation and exclusion, which is systematically, embedded with day-to-day life of people at the household and community levels. Majorities of Muslims are landless, around 70 percent have no agricultural land and their food production is not sufficient for their survival in the study area.

Educationally, Muslims are a disadvantaged group. Women have a low literacy rate and lesser access to higher education. Discrimination between Muslim boys and girls is observed in attendance in different types of schools. The majority of Muslim children attend Madrasa than the government schools. In schools, the dropout rate for girls is higher than for boys due to their religious and cultural obligations. As a whole, attendance at private schools/colleges at home or outside by children among Muslims is negligible.

In the Muslim communities, children facing the cumulative impacts of poverty, social discrimination and social exclusion are severely restricted from enjoying their basic rights including education. Poverty has pulled out many Muslim students from school for work and/or compelled them never to enroll. Social exclusion has pushed them out of the classroom because of the culturally built in caste system or other types of taboos.

In this context, the education system is unable to address the multiple challenges that children bring to school. Many Muslim parents and children are not finding the current education, curriculum, school environment relevant for them as per their needs. There is no inclusive education system, no feeding provisions for hungry children, no social exclusionary issue discussion forums in the school, no pedagogical practice to promote the morals of the socially excluded children and a lack of a Muslim-friendly cultural environment in schools.

There is no provision by local government to support these runaway/pushed away children. In this situation, children themselves are responsible for their own and their family's survival. Poor quality and rigid education in this situation has no meaning. If by any chance these children enter education, they either end up in resource-poor schools or Madrasas, which still have not been fully recognized as educational institution in Nepal.

In Nepal, the gender issue has become a dominant patriarchal model of exclusion. In the study area, Muslim women are far more discriminated and deprived than men in terms of education, ownership of property, employment, participation in civil society organizations and political parties and overall decision making process at the household and community level.

Muslims representation and participation in politics, government employment and civil society organizations is negligible. From the gender perspective, women participation and representation in politics and government jobs is almost nil because of their religious and cultural restrictions and their lower educational status as well. Their representation at various levels of government at the community and district level is also very low, which is a clear reflection of exclusion of people in the development processes of the community and nation as well.

Overall, these research findings indicate that Muslims are one of the most highly marginalized, excluded religious minority groups in Nepal. Poverty, discrimination and a disadvantaged position at the household and community levels are the key elements of exclusion of Muslims in Banke district. The existing social, economic, cultural and political structures are responsible factors for social exclusion of Muslims in Nepal.

#### **4.4 Madrasa Education in Nepal**

Education is a fundamental right of every citizen in the country. Everyone has the right to education. Islam puts considerable emphasis on its followers to acquire knowledge. In the Western World, the purpose of education is to provide for the economic prosperity of a nation. At a personal level, the purpose of education is to acquire academic and professional skills that enable one to earn a comfortable and respectable

life. For a Muslim providing economic prosperity for a nation does not contradict his/her Islamic beliefs, however focusing the goals of education solely for moneymaking is unpalatable.

Islamic education or Christian or Hindu education is a misnomer. Education can hardly be understood under such titles. However, one can construct such division as religious education and secular education. It should not mean more than what we understand by mathematical, ethical, metaphysical or biological education

Muslims of Nepal are considered an educationally disadvantaged group. Wherever Muslims are in considerable number, they have managed by themselves, to give their children basic Islamic education by setting up temporary Maktab<sup>5</sup> or Madrasa<sup>6</sup> and enable them to recite the Holy Quran in their native Arabic Language as well as to know the ways of prayer (Parwez, et al., 2003). Generally, Madrasas and Maktabas run on donations (Zakat) provided by Muslims. There are some fundamental differences between Madrasa and Maktab. Maktabas are generally found in Village Development Committees (VDCs) and are associated with a mosque. They provide religious education only. Madrasas may be independent of mosques and provide religious as well as academic education. Madrasas are found in Municipalities as well as in VDCs.

The government of Nepal is making various efforts to educate Muslim children. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has included Muslims as a special focus group and has developed special policies and programs to increase their access to mainstream education. All policies and programs have been developed line in with Education for All (EFA). Accordingly, Nepal is to ensure that by 2015 all children will have a quality basic and primary education. They will not be discriminated by culture, ethnicity or caste.

---

<sup>5</sup> A building or group of buildings used for teaching Islamic theology and religious law, typically including a mosque ([fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/26014.pdf](http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/26014.pdf))

<sup>6</sup> *Maktab* is an Arabic word meaning elementary schools. Though it was primarily used for teaching children in reading, writing, grammar and Islamic subjects (such as Qur'an recitations), other practical and theoretical subjects were also often taught. Until the 20th century, *Maktabas* were the only means of mass education in much of the Islamic world. While in Arabic, *Maktab* refers to only elementary school, the word *Maktab* is also used in Persian language in Afghanistan and is an equivalent term to school, comprising both the primary and secondary schooling ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maktab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maktab)).

#### 4.4.1 Muslim Educational Institutions

Muslims have their own traditional educational institutions named Madrasa and Maktab. Maktab is a community affair where a Maulvi or female Maulvi teach elementary Arabic language and recitation of Quran. The beneficiaries of such teaching offer on their own some consideration in cash or in kind. Maktab is mainly concerned with providing knowledge of the Quran whereas Madrasas are established to provide Islamic education and the education of other important areas. Madrasas can be considered as the main educational institutions of a Muslim community, which are established to provide religious education as well as education about other needed areas. The Madrasas of Nepal are also playing a significant role in the field of education.

The large numbers of Muslims of Nepal prefer to send their children to Madrasa instead of the mainstream schools to get Islamic education including knowledge of Quran. This fact is also supported by the responses of parents and leaders of Muslim community from the study. However, they are not fully satisfied by Madrasa education because, according to them, it does not provide those skills to meet the challenges of daily life as the mainstream education does. The Muslims of Nepal are looking for an education system, which could cater to their needs of religious as well as general secular education. There is a great opportunity to utilize Madrasas as an institution of mainstream education to promote access of Muslim children to mainstream education.

The government of Nepal has no detailed information regarding the number of Madrasas in Nepal. However, during fieldwork, Islami Sangh Nepal and UNESCO Banke Club reported that there are more than 4000 Madrasas in Nepal. Out of them around 1100 Madrasa are registered at the DEO office of Nepal as community schools.

According to local Muslim political leaders, more than 100 Maktabas are running in the Banke district. About 3000 children receive Islamic education through these institutions. Female students are more numerous in comparison to the male students attending these institutions. Actual data related to Maktabas and the numbers of student are not clear because these institutions are not yet registered in the District Education Office.



#### 4.4.2 Status of Madrasa Registration

There was no record available in the District Education Offices about the number of Madrasas operating in Banke district. According to an estimate made by the DEO Banke and Madrasa stakeholders, there are about two-hundred Madrasas running in the district at present. While as there are four Madrasas in Jaispur VDC, only three Madrasas have registered with the DEO.

In Nepal, the Madrasa registration process began in 2007. In 2007, out of the total established Madrasas, 64.7 percent were registered. Table 1 below indicates the registration process of Madrasa. Muslims of Nepal are ready to register Madrasas as an educational institution with some reservations. Some very important issues were raised with regards to the management of Madrasas Management namely; (a) ensuring autonomy of Madrasas to preserve cultural and religious identity (b) Madrasa sustainability and ownership (c) transformation of Madrasas into quality learning institutions (d) the medium of instruction once the Madrasa is accepted as mainstream (e) the Madrasas governing body (f) teacher recruitment and licensing and (g) motivating girls to attend school (Parwez et al., 2010).

**Table 4.15** Number of Registered Madrasas by Year and Grade

S.No	Year	Number	Percent
1.	2007	75	64.7
2.	2008	21	18.1
3.	2009	20	17.2
	Total	116	100.0
	Grade	No	Percent
1	Up to class one	45	38.8
2	Up to class two	30	25.9
3	Up to class three	32	27.6
4	Up to class five	9	7.7
	Total	116	100.0

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

The Government of Nepal has been undertaking efforts to register Madrasa as a primary school to teach mainstream subjects in order to enhance their capacity for the betterment of life. The Government is also planning to provide assistance to these registered Madrasas. However, this effort is focused mainly on utilizing these Madrasas as institutions of mainstream education. It has no consideration for Islamic courses being conducted in them, which is a primary aim of these Madrasas according to the desires of the Muslim communities. Such policies should be developed on the basis of a thorough analysis of different cases of registration of Madrasas in other countries especially, the cases of Madrasas of Bihar and Bengal<sup>7</sup>

#### **4.4.3 Teaching Mainstream Subjects in Madrasa with Government Recognition.**

During fieldwork, three Madrasas were chosen for an in-depth study. The Madrasa Gausiya was established in 1982 to educate Muslim children in Urdu. It was registered in 2007 as a community school. This Madrasa teaches mainstream courses (up to secondary level) along with Islamic courses. This is a unique Madrasa because it is the only government recognized Madrasa teaching up to S.L.C. Students of this Madrasa

---

<sup>7</sup> Madrasas in the state of Bihar are affiliated and registered with the Directorate of Islamic Education. The function of the Directorate of Islamic Education is to look into the over-all functioning of Madrasas in the state. The Madrasas Examination Board is mainly entrusted with the task of conducting Examination from the secondary to Post-Graduate levels. In past, these Madrasas were conducting under DARSE NEZAMIA System of Islamic Education, which later on came to be known as DARSE ALIA system of Education, incorporating, modern subjects besides oriental ones and brought under the ambit of Bihar State Madrasa Education Board. DARSE ALIA, system of education includes subjects such as Hindi, English, Math, Science, History, Geography, Economics, and Civics etc.

The Madrasas of Bihar are classified in three categories on the basis of their mode of registration and affiliation, with the Bihar State Madrasa Education Board. The first categories of Madrasas used to conduct education from primary to post graduate level known as Wastania (Primary), Fauquania (Secondary), Maulavi (Intermediate), Alim (Graduate) and Fazil (Post-Graduate). Second and third category Madrasas conducts the course only up to secondary level. All these are government aided Madrasas maintained though partially on the regular government budget (<http://www.biharmadrasaboard.com>).

There are three types of Madrasas in West Bengal: High Madrasa, Senior Madrasa and Khariji Madrasa. The High Madrasas are teaching secular subjects such as mathematics, social science, geography, all are taught, in concurrence with those of schools under the Madhyamik Board. Though negligible in number, some Madrasas have also introduced computer studies. Arabic, as a classical language is taught on a large scale.

In senior Madrasa – English, Mathematics, History and Geography are taught to a comparatively lesser extent and studies in Islamic theology get the greatest weightage. These Madrasas claim that degree provided by these Madrasas such as Alim and Fazil should be treated equivalent to Madhyamik and Graduate levels respectively. Khariji Madrasa, where only Islamic theology is taught, is not recognized by the Madrasa Board. Government provides a regular budget to first two categories of Madrasas (<http://pd.cpim.org>).

have been participating in the S.L.C. Examination since 2001. Although this Madrasa is recognized as a school, it is not getting any financial support from the government. It collects a fee of Rs. 25 to 75 from each student. Every year it provides scholarships to 80 students belonging to low-income groups. However, the income from fees is not enough. Money is received through donations from the Muslim community. In this Madrasa, the number of girl students is significant. The percentage of male and female students in this Madrasa is 54.34 percent and 45.65 percent respectively. It is remarkable that 30.53 percent students are Hindus. The school administration reported that some Hindu students are studying Urdu and even Islamic courses in this Madrasa.

All the students in other Madrasas are Muslims. This indicates that Madrasas can serve as institutions of mainstream education for all, not only for Muslims once the government recognizes them. On the other hand, Madrasas do not hesitate to take in non-Muslim children, which promote cultural harmony between Muslims and non-Muslims. Madrasa organizers reported that their institution is facing serious financial problems because of lack of sustainable financial support. This Madrasa is expecting continued assistance from the government in terms of books and teachers required for a registered school. A notable fact is that this Madrasa is conducting a separate section for Islamic education. Madrasa Ahamdiya Darul Islam Kingariyanpura and Madrasa Darul Ulum Garib Nawaz, Jaipur are also registered at DEO of Banke.

#### **4.4.4 Students in Madrasa and Government Schools.**

It is found that there are a large number of students studying in the sampled Madrasas. Altogether 912 students were under study at the time of sampling in these Madrasas at the primary level, with an average of 304 students per Madrasa. A remarkable fact about the students was that among them the percentage of girl students was very high. Out of the total students, 52 percent were girls. During the field visit two government schools, situated in the field area were examined. It is a fact that a majority of Muslims prefer to send their children to Madrasa than government school. During the key informant interview, a school headmaster reported that Muslims are not interested in sending their children to government schools because of a lack of religious education and Urdu language teaching. However, a majority of the Muslim girls registered their

names in a government school in order to receive a girl's scholarship. However, it is found that there a fewer number of Muslim students in government schools in comparison to Madrasas (Table 4.16).

**Table 4.16** Number of Students in Government Schools and Madrasas

Names of the Institutions	Grade	Muslims			Non-Muslims			Grand Total		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Shree Nepal Rastriya Primary School, Kingariyapura	Primary (upto 5 class)	121	109	230	161	146	307	282	255	537
Ni.Ma.Bi Jaispur (Jaispur secondary school)	Primary	133	135	268	170	167	337	303	302	605
	Lower secondary	34	40	74	60	52	112	94	92	186
Madrasa Gausiya (Secondary School)	Primary	90	126	216	55	42	97	145	168	313
	Lower Secondary	57	75	132	32	28	60	89	103	192
	Secondary	33	39	42	12	10	22	45	49	94
Madrasa Ahmadiya Darul Islam Kingariyanpura	Primary (upto 3 class)	93	96	189	-	-	-	-	-	-
Madrasa Darul Ulum Garib Nawaj, Jaispur	Primary (upto 5 class)	255	252	507	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

As discovered during interviews with Madrasa stakeholders, the respondents explained that the Muslim parents, who hesitate to send their daughters to the mainstream schools, feel comfortable sending them to Madrasas. Another reason for the high presence of Muslim girls in Madrasa is that a Muslim woman should be able to read Quran, therefore, the girls are sent to Madrasa.

### 4.4.5 Qualification of Teachers

There were altogether 16 teachers in all of the Madrasas with an average of six teachers per Madrasa. Among the Madrasas teachers, there are only four (25 percent) female teachers. Of the total, 50 percent of the teachers have a qualification in Islamic education. Almost all teachers with qualification in Islamic degree had their degrees from India. They teach Islamic courses in Urdu language. The rest of the teachers are educated from government schools and colleges of Nepal. They teach mainstream subjects such as science, math and English in the school. There are an insufficient number of teachers in the sample Madrasas to teach all of the mainstream subjects. It is demonstrated that Madrasas are capable of conducting Islamic education but their capacity to conduct the mainstream courses is not insufficient.

In the government school, of the total number of teachers, 67 percent are male and 37 percent are female. Almost 50 percent of teachers have an Intermediate degree, 40 percent have graduate degrees, and only 2.9 percent possessed the qualification of a Master's degree.

**Table 4.17** Educational Qualifications of Teachers in Madrasa and Government School

	Category	Madrasa			Government School		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Qualification in Islamic education	Alim	3		3(18.8%)	-	-	
	Maulana	2		2(12.5%)	-	-	
	Hafiz	3		3(18.8%)	-	-	
Total		8		8 (100%)			
Qualification in Government education	Masters	-	-	-	1	-	1(2.9%)
	Bachelor	3	1	4(25%)	11	3	14(40%)
	Intermediate				9	8	17(48.6%)
	SLC	1	3	4(25%)	1	2	3(8.6%)
Total		4	4	8	22	13	35
Grand Total		12(75%)	4(25%)	16(100%)	22(62.9%)	13(37.1%)	35(100%)
Caste/ethnicity	Bahun/Chhetri		1	1(5.9%)	15	10	25(71.4%)
	Muslims	12	2	14(82.4%)	7	3	10(28.6%)
	Dalits	1	1	2(11.8%)	-	-	-
Grand Total		13(76.5%)	4(23.5%)	17(100%)	22(62.9%)	13(37.1%)	35(100%)

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

The majority of the Madrasa teachers are Muslim (76.5 percent). Only two female teachers are non-Muslim. The situation in the government school is different. Of the total teachers, 71.4 percent are Brahman/Chhetri and only 28.6 percent are Muslim. This figure shows that Muslims have low access to government school teaching jobs.

#### **4.4.6 Infrastructure Facilities**

All the Madrasas have their own building, i.e. a building made of bricks and cement with a concrete roof. The number of rooms in Madrasa varied. Madrasa Darum Ulum Garib Nawaj is attached with the Masjid building. It has five classrooms and five toilets.

There is a lack of furniture for students. The students have to sit on the floor in the classroom, which is not a suitable sitting arrangement. There are insufficient teaching materials and few playgrounds at the schools. This is Government registered Madrasa, which has been receiving financial support over the past 3 years.

Madrasa Gaushiya has a very good infrastructure in comparison to other Madrasas in Banke. It has sufficient classrooms, office rooms, a library room, a study room as well as furniture for students. It has a maintained Muslim friendly environment in the school.

However, there is a lack of entertainment facilities, sports, music and other extracurricular activities. There is a small playground, which is not sufficient for students.

This Madrasa is conducting an education up to the secondary level. A majority of the Madrasas has no desks or benches for the students of primary level and the students usually sit on a mat. A blackboard is the only instructional material being used in Madrasas. With the exception of the building, the physical facilities in Madrasas, especially at the Primary level, are inadequate.

#### **4.4.7 Financial Condition and Facility for Teacher**

The Madrasas are running on limited financial support. They have to rely on donations and alms given by the community. They have no sustainable financial support system.

The management committee members and mainly Maulvis have to work hard to collect donations. As a result, the Madrasa teachers are getting low salary in comparison to government school teachers. A great majority of teachers are getting Rs. 2000 to 3500 per month. The other source of income for the Madrasa teacher is the alms given by the community on cultural, religious and family occasions.

#### **4.4.8 Madrasa Management System**

The Madrasas have management committees, which look after the management of these Madrasas. The management committees comprise the Muslim religious leaders, Muslim intellectuals and elites of Muslim community who could contribute to it. The committee is selected from the local community. The main function of the management committee is to look after the overall management of the Madrasas, collect funds, donations (Zakat), conduct meetings and keep systematic records of Madrasas.

The committee also appoints a head teacher to look after the administration of these Madrasas. The Management Committee also appoints other teachers.

The Madrasas provide free education to Muslim children. Almost all studied Madrasas are operating from donations (zakat and fitra). The management committee has authority to spend money for the salary of teachers, student welfare, physical development, books, stationery and other administrative expenses.

There are no systematic and updated financial records for the Madrasas. The Madrasa organizers do not have a proper system of accounting due to a lack of skilled human resource.

The Madrasas, which provided information about total income and expenditures, could not provide any further details regarding finances.

The participants of focus group discussion (FGD) said that the present Madrasa management is in the hands of religious leaders and some local elites. It has not properly been incorporated into the local Muslim community and intellectuals. There is a serious problem in the recruitment of teachers, administrative staffs as well as in the financial management. The financial management is not transparent. There is demand

for proper monitoring by the government once a Madrasas is linked with the mainstream education system, however, they stressed that the management of Madrasas should be in the hands of the Muslim community.

According to them, Madrasa is a religious as well as an institution of Islamic education. Its main aim is to propagate Islamic values and inculcating them among the future generation. It is a nonpolitical and a cultural institution, which should remain free from any politics of power. Political intervention could contaminate the nature of Madrasas. They demand for the formation of a Central-level Madrasa Board for facilitation of policies and plans at different levels to guide the operation of Madrasas and establish a uniform system of management for all the Madrasas across the country.

They also demand for the recognition and financial support for the Madrasas. The social leaders stated that the structure of Madrasa education should be changed to incorporate mainstream education. They admitted that Madrasa education is not catering to all the needs of Muslims according to the changing context. It was heavily providing the religious education only, rather than the modern knowledge; therefore, it should be linked with the mainstream education.

#### **4.4.9 Curriculum in Madrasas and Mainstream Schools**

There is no uniform or fixed prescribed curriculum for the Madrasas. The education is based on specific books and a great variation in the selection of these books. In the study area, the Madrasas curriculum is mainly concerned with Islamic education. On the basis of responses given by the Madrasa stakeholders, the general curriculum structure of the Madrasas is as follows: reading of Quran, Urdu, Arabic and Islamic study are the main subjects. All the registered Madrasas of Banke district have also included in mainstream subjects like Nepali, Mathematics, English, General knowledge, History and Geography into their curricula.

As compared with the primary school curriculum of Nepal, the subjects such as Science, Social Studies, Environment Education, Health and Physical Education are not included in the curricula of Madrasa education. Madrasa curriculum shows that the knowledge of Science, Social Studies, Health are imparted through subjects like



General Knowledge, History and Geography but the curriculum is not well planned and the content is not adequate.

Another important point is that the mainstream school's curriculum is more planned and systematic in comparison to Madrasas.

#### **4.4.10 Teaching Methods and Evaluation System**

In the Madrasas, Urdu is used as a medium of instruction except the instruction of language subjects such as Nepali and English. The teaching method in the Madrasas is generally based on the traditional method of parrot memorization. There is a lack of instructional materials. Evaluation is solely based on the teachers' wish. There is no proper record of the students' evaluation. Many of them could not produce the past records of students. It is also observed that all the students enrolled in a class get promotion to upper grades except if they are very weak in studies.

During the field survey, the key informants reported that the teachers of Kapilbastu district are generally using Nepali and Awadhi languages in teaching but at other places teachers use Urdu as the medium of instruction. Similarly, in Rautahat they use Bhojpuri as well as Urdu.

Generally, instruction in Madrasas is based on grade teaching, however, they also use multi-grade teaching in cases where there is a lack of teachers. Multi-grade teaching is based on the ability of students to self-pace their learning. Teaching at the pre-primary level is solely based on grade teaching.

#### **4.5 Causes of Lower Participation of Muslims in Mainstream Education**

One of the objectives of this study is to explore the causes of lower enrollment of Muslim Children in mainstream schools. Field data clearly indicate that Muslim children are lagging behind in terms of their access to mainstream schools. The situation is much more serious in the Terai region, where large populations of Muslims reside. Only half of school-aged children are studying in mainstream schools while the other half is studying in Madrasa including one-fifth of the children studying in both streams.

### 4.5.1 Poverty

It was found that the majority of Muslims felt that the poor economic status of Muslims is the major hindrance that is preventing their children from going to school. According to the respondents, poor families do not send their children to school for a lack of financial resources to cover the enrollment fees, books, stationery, uniform and Tiffin (Case 4).

Although education in a mainstream school is free, there are extra related expenses and they are not in a position to cover these expenses. In this situation, Madrasa education is the best alternative for their children. Madrasa education is free with no additional fees or expenses. Daily meals and lodging are even provided to the very poor Muslims.

#### **Case 4 Government School- A Distant Dream to Poor Muslim Family**

Mudhasir, 38, belongs to Kingariya group of Muslim. He married at the age of 18. He has two sons and a daughter. His elder son got married in 1997. In comparison to others, his family is economically poor. He has no land in his name so his whole family works as farm laborer in the village. His family earns only 150 rupees a day, which is not sufficient for their survival.

There are both the government run lower secondary school and primary level Madrasa. Majority of the poor families prefer sending their children to Madrasa as it provides free education. His children are class three Madrasa literate. They could not continue their education because of the poverty. Now, his elder son has two sons who also study in the Madrasa in class 3.

They are aware of both the Madrasa and modern education and its importance in their life. They also want their children to join the government school but in vain because they have to pay for school uniform, tiffin, stationeries and exam fee there. Therefore, they are not sure if they can match their dreams because of the poverty.

### 4.5.2 Lack of Accomodative Syllabus and Textual Material on Cultural Aspects of Muslims in schools

As found in the course of this study, a large number of Muslim children in the study area study in the Madrasas. Some are studying in the Madrasas only and some are studying in both Madrasas and mainstream schools. Madrasa education is flourishing as a parallel system to mainstream education. In the Muslim community, Islamic education, especially the knowledge of their religious texts, Quran and Hadith is

mandatory to every Muslim and it is obvious that Muslims in the study area are sending their children to Madrasas to fulfill their compulsory religious duty of "Farze Ain".

Since Madrasas are the Islamic institution, primarily established with the purpose of propagating the knowledge of Islam and ultimately provide the opportunity for the learning of the primary religious text, Quran and Hadith, the Muslims send their children to Madrasas for a Islamic education (Case 5).

A Islamic education is the primary reason for sending Muslim children to Madrasas but it is not the sole reason. According to respondents, Madrasas also propagate cultural knowledge. They orient the child with respect to the Islamic culture. Muslims stressed that they send their children to Madrasas for cultural and religious training. Many respondents also stressed that Madrasas provide moral education. Actually, Quran and

**Case 5 Muslims Prefer to Send Kids to Madrasa**

Nasar, 42, is a farmer living in the village of Jaispur, Banke. He has three daughters and three sons. His elder son is lives separately after his marriage. His two daughters and two sons are studying at Madrasa Gaushiya Secondary School in Nepalgunj.

Government registered Madrasa, the school has been providing both the mainstream subjects and Islamic courses. Majority of the teachers are Muslims including the headmaster. They have maintained Muslim-friendly environment in the school. Therefore, he is sending their children in this school. He is happy with the school curriculum, teaching methods, education quality, and environment. He wants to send their children up to SLC in this school and then to India for higher education because there is no separate Muslim friendly girls colleges in Nepal.

Hadith teach about the code of conduct, which any human being should follow. The knowledge of these texts is essential for moral development. A Madrasa graduate is always aware of moral values and their duties. Muslims send their children to Madrasas to obtain a moral education. Because of these reasons, not only the poor families but also the well-to-do families send their children to Madrasas. Some Muslims of better economic standing accepted that, since their children were studying in mainstream schools and they could not go Madrasas in the same time, they arranged a Maulvi as a private tutor to teach their children the Quran and Hadith.

Another reason of sending their children to Madrasas is to learn Urdu. Madrasa education opens an opportunity for the employed Muslim youths in the Gulf countries. Knowledge of Arabic language makes moving to a Gulf country relatively easier for them.

According to the respondents, Muslims give equal importance to mainstream education for boys while having different an opinion about education for girls. According to them, Madrasa education is more important for girls than boys. They consider it necessary for girls' moral values, especially to be educated in Urdu.

The respondents stated that as Madrasa education is needed for religious and cultural orientation, mainstream education is equally important for their livelihoods and to compete with others in the present day context. They preferred mainstream education because it opens the door to job opportunities. They only preferred Madrasa education for the religious aspect of education, cultural identity, and learning of Urdu, development of the Islamic faith and learning cultural conducts.

#### **4.5.3 School Curriculum and Medium of Instruction**

The respondents have some specific reservations against the curricula and instruction in the schools. There are complaints that the government is not given proper attention to their educational needs. School education does not provide cultural education, based on Islamic values, which to them, is their primary need. In relation to Islamic values, they stressed that Islam teaches such moral values, which are beneficial to humanity. They stressed that such values are not incorporated into social studies and moral education. Their child should have the chance to study these values in school. They said that the provision of elective subjects in schools should incorporate Islamic education for the Muslim children in schools.

**Case 6 Medium of Instruction Makes Muslim Children Failed in School**

Najakat Ali, a 35, has been teaching at Madrasa Gaushiya Secondary School, Nepalgunj since 1998. He has passed SLC from the very school in 1992 and completed his BA from an Indian college in Bahraich in 1997.

His father had a small business. Even today, two of his brothers run cloths shop in Nepalgunj. When he was at school, they were not allowed to speak Urdu language in the class. A class monitor used to note the names of the students who speak in Urdu/Awadhi language inside the classroom. Later on the teachers used to punish them. Just for speaking in mother tongue, he and his brothers were beaten for many times. He never understood properly what his teachers taught them in the classroom until class 3. There was only one Urdu teacher who would translate their lessons in Urdu. Sometimes, he would feel happy in his classroom because he had at least a period to study in his mother tongue.

Only from class 4, he started understanding Nepali clearly. During his time, there was no choice but to attend the classes taught by the teachers who never spoke Urdu language. However, he and his brother would physically be in class, but mentally they would be somewhere else because they would not understand what teachers would speak and explain. As a result, they would never get better results in the exam.

However, the government is not paying proper attention in this direction. Another complaint of the Muslims is related to the medium of instruction. The majority of Muslims complained that they have a problem related to the language of instruction in schools, which is mainly Nepali. They require the learning of Urdu, which is also not available in the schools. Many Muslim children could not understand properly the instructions in class due to the Nepali medium of instruction (Case 6). They said that there are some cases of kids dropping out due to the lack of mother tongue education in schools. In this way, they feel discriminated in schools in relation to the curriculum and language of instruction. It is also a major cause of their lower enrollment in mainstream schools.

**4.5.4 School Environment**

The respondents were asked about the adequacy and quality of the school environment for the Muslims. They were also asked about the presence of any factor in the school environment, which is unacceptable to them for being against their culture or beliefs. Only a few respondents agreed that the environment in schools is posing a threat to their cultural beliefs, but their responses were genuine and can be taken as a cause of

low enrollment of Muslim children in mainstream schools. Muslims complained that many activities in the school are not compatible with their system. They complained that there is paucity of textual material on the significant aspects of Islam and a genuine effort on the part of curriculum designers to build necessary awareness about this minority's aspirations and beliefs for creating an atmosphere of harmony.

According to them, Muslims are to use to following a specific code of conduct, which is not present in the school environment. For example, they complained about the proper cultural friendly toilet facilities in the schools.

While the official textbooks have a number of chapters about other religions and the gods, and goddesses of other faiths, there was little mention of Islam. Furthermore, the content of the early morning prayers organized in the schools is generally unacceptable for Muslims. The content of the prayers, practiced in schools should be such that they respect the beliefs of other communities as well. Prayer should never be exclusive.

Muslims of Nepal are pained to find themselves ignored on other counts as well. While the holidays and auspicious days of other religions are acknowledged, Muslim festivals have no place in the calendar. There is also a demand that the practice of holding exams during their fasting days, (i.e. the month of Ramadan), be given up.

The other major complaint is related to the problems in the accomplishment of Namaz in the schools. They stated that it is mandatory for a grown up child to accomplish Namaz (at least on Friday). Schools do not provide an environment for their child for performing Namaz even on Fridays.

Muslims felt that the presence of a teacher from their own community would help to make the environment of the school friendlier to them. At the very least, the presence of teachers having a good orientation to Islamic culture is essential. They would understand their culture and would play an active role in making the environment of the schools friendlier to the Muslims. There are however, plenty of teachers in schools, who are Muslim and who have a good understanding of the language and culture of the Muslims. In this way, the environment of the schools is compatible with the Muslims in the sense of a presence of teachers with a good understanding of Islamic culture. The

same thing is found in terms of the presence of female teachers. There are plenty of female teachers in the schools of the study area. In this way, the environment in schools is somewhat friendly to the girls of the Muslim community in relation to the presence of female teachers. However, there is a lack of proportionate Muslim female teachers in these schools.

One of the major concerns of the Muslims in the study area is related to the environment in schools with respect to the education of girls in mainstream schools. They are against co-education for grown up girls. They complained that the dress code of the schools is also against their cultural beliefs which state that girls have to wear a skirt or pants. They are against such dress. They also complained that dancing and singing in the schools is against their cultural beliefs. Muslims accepted that although their children are not directly discriminated in schools the above constraints have developed feelings of discrimination against them in mainstream schools.

#### **4.5.5 Sense of Discrimination and Humiliation**

During the field survey, very few respondents of households admitted to having no experience related to the discrimination from the other religious groups in the schools. Those who complained about such a type of feeling belonged to the rural areas. Their complaint was that a section of higher caste Hindus in the villages treats them as untouchables. They are treated as a person, whose faith is against their religion. During the key informant interview, one person reported that a child was forced to give up his study as school administration ridiculed him because he was a regular absentee in the classes on Fridays because of his prayers.

### **Case 7 School Forces Muslim Girl to Give up Study Discrimination**

Raina, 18, is working as Madrasa teacher in her village Jaispur. She has six family members including his father and mother. She has two sisters and a brother. All of her sisters had been married a little before they were 17 years. Her parents also have passed away three years ago. Her brother now is 17 years old and he is still unmarried. He has been pulling rickshaw in Nepalgunj and earns 2-3 hundred rupees each day, which is the only means to live her family on.

Raina is the youngest child of her parents and has studied up to class 7 from a government school of Jaispur. At school, she was the only Muslim girl in her class from her village. Her father was also a primary school teacher in the village. Her father paid school fee from his earning. During her school life, she had to face lot of problems for being a Muslim girl. Majority of the teachers were from the Hindu caste groups. Her class friends used to tease her by saying bookish black girl as she used to wear black burqa. Many times her boy classmate kicked and slapped her for no reasons. Even her teacher did not pay attention towards the humiliation and insult by her classmates.

Sometimes, teachers would also ask her about her religion, culture and make me a joke of it. Not only in the schools, the villagers also started teasing her when she was in class seven because they had misconceptions about girl's education and Muslim religion. Once she completed class 7, she could not bear the humiliations and discriminations against her and she gave up her study. Years after she dropped the school, she is not happy with what she learnt at her school because her education is neither useful to satisfy her whims of life nor to get a job.

The key informants as well as the participants of group discussions were generally unanimously in agreement with the version of respondents of the household surveys. They added that they are being discriminated in many walks of day-to-day life. They are discriminated in terms of access to government jobs. On August 3<sup>rd</sup> the Nepalese parliament adopted a bill amending the Civil Service Act 1993. The amendments provide reservations for disadvantaged groups by allocating 45 percent of the jobs in the bureaucracy to these groups. Of the 45 percent posts, 33 percent are allocated to women, 27 percent to Indigenous nationalities, 22 percent to Madhesi (Terai population), 9 percent to Dalits, while the physically challenged are allocated 5 percent and people from backward regions 4 percent. However, the government has not allocated the reservations in civil service for Muslims.



Although the constitution of the Nepal strictly prohibits any discrimination based on religion, yet some section of the society practices discrimination in the community and in schools.

Though Muslims themselves do not subscribe to the view that religious discrimination is the real cause of their low enrollment in schools, they do believe that the behavior of certain groups or individuals in the schools makes the school-going children among Muslims to shy away or opt out of the schools. These victims of such discrimination feel uneasy in the schools (Case 7).

Besides the discrimination from the high caste groups, a few Muslims experience discrimination from the state towards schooling. They said that the curriculum of mainstream schools is not very useful for Muslims. According to them, as a religious duty, every Muslim must study the Quran. Urdu is their cultural language. All the literature related to their religion is written in Urdu, therefore, propagating Urdu among their children is an essential requirement. Both of the above-mentioned requirements of Muslims are not fulfilled by mainstream schools. They are compelled to send their children to Madrasas, although many Madrasas fulfill only their religious and cultural needs.

They are restrictively satisfied with the Madrasa system of education that fulfills both their spiritual and temporal needs. However, they understand that Madrasa education in the long run falls short of their requirement for better opportunities in life in Nepal and abroad.

A majority of Muslims said that they are excluded from the social, economic and political spheres because of their ignorance in the absence of proper education. They believed that the government is the main actor of social exclusion and has not developed suitable educational policies and programs for Muslims. They pointed out that the lack of religious and cultural education, lack of Muslim teachers and female teachers in the mainstream schools are the main discouragement factor towards schooling.

Some of the respondents expressed the acute sense of deprivation from the government and the social groups belonging to “caste Hindus”. They expressed their feelings of humiliation at the hands of authorities. They said that distribution of scholarships and other benefits is mostly discriminatory and induces a sense of shame among Muslims.

#### **4.5.6 Presence of Agencies Advocating Madrasa Education**

Muslims understand the need for mainstream education. They are mainly concerned with the content of some texts, which do not accommodate their religious/social feelings. They are also worried about the general lack of facilities for girls in the schools. However, there are some small groups, which for these reasons speak against the mainstream education.

The Maulvis and the people harvesting the benefits of the Madrasa education advocate Madrasa education generally.

Some respondents admit that schooling does not affect their relationship with other groups. However, it does affect their relationship within their community. Some conservative Muslims thought that schooling, especially of the girls might be a threat to Islamic culture. They may adopt non-cultural behavior. Their main objection was related to dress code, discipline and faith.

#### **4.5.7 Other Factors**

There are some other factors, which are responsible for the low and non-participation of Muslims in mainstream education. The economic factor is common to all the Muslim communities. Economically, a majority of Muslims are poorer than other groups. These groups are religiously more orthodox and not capable of sending their children to mainstream and private schools. However, they have an alternative education institution of Madrasa. They tend to choose Madrasa education, which causes a low enrollment of Muslims in mainstream schools.

Besides economic factors, there are so many other factors causing the low enrollment of Muslims in mainstream education. The low literacy rate of the parents, lack of motivational force from the government and community as well. They said that there is

a lack of job opportunities for Muslims. There is no any specific reservation for Muslims in government jobs. After completion of SLC or a higher education degree, they could not easily get a job (Case 8).

They also complained that the school education has not developed income-generating skills, which is a main requirement for their livelihood. The government does not provide incentives or any specific support. They also stated that there was even a lack of quality educational institutions in their area, which does not attract Muslims children to mainstream schools.

#### **Case 8 Deprived of the Government Job, Talent Muslim Boy Becomes Grosser**

Fayaz Ansari, a 28 years old Muslim, is running a small vegetable shop in Nepalgunj. He is the first son of Rizwan and Saline Ansari. His family is very poor. There are six members in his family.

In spite of his parents' poverty, he started his school life at the age of six from Jaispur Secondary School and passed the SLC in 2003. In his school life, he never failed and was one of the brilliant students in the school. His father used to work as a farmer in the village. After his SLC, he could not join the college only because his family's financial condition was poor. Since there was no college in his village, it was again a difficult task to join the college in Nepalgunj, which is at five kilometer from his village. It was not possible to pay for his daily bus fare, tuition fee and other expenses for his study

He tried his luck for the government job for three years but in vain. Finally, he decided to move from his village to Nepalgunj Municipality for a small business. Now, he is running a small vegetable shop in Nepalgunj that gives him 5 to 6 hundred rupees income a day. He is happy with his earning, as it is sufficient to meet his household expenses. He has two daughters, studying in class four and five in government schools after their earlier Madrasa education up to class 3. He has planned to educate them up to bachelor's degree for their better life.

However, Muslims also realize that their culture, religion and way of thinking are responsible for their lower enrollment in mainstream schools. They accepted that many Muslims have conservative feelings and a general abhorrence towards anything mainstream. Higher education for girls is not a priority for them. They think that up to a primary level, Madrasa education is sufficient for girls, because they do not allow women to hold a job outside of their house.

They added that lack of separate girls' schools and colleges, the absence or meager presence of Muslim teachers in the schools, and a lack of a technical education and skills are equally responsible for their non/low participation in mainstream schools.

## **4.6 Socio-economic Profile of Indian Muslims**

In this sub chapter, a brief introduction of the study area of India, socio-economic and educational condition of Indian Muslims are discussed and presented.

### **4.6.1 Introduction of the Study Area: Bahraich District**

Bahraich district is situated in the north part of Devipatan division. According to census 2001, the area of Bacharach district is 5020 sq. km., which is 35.29 percent of the Devipatan division. The District of Bahraich has an international border with Nepal along the north, the Districts of Barabanki and Sitapur are in south, Kheri in west and Gonda and Srawasti are along the eastern side of the district. The northern part of the district is in the Terai region, which is covered by dense natural forests. Sarjoo, Ghaghra, Kaudiyala and Garuwa are the main rivers of the district of Bahraich. The soil of this district is fertile. Domat, Matiyar, Balui and light Domat are the types of soils in the district. Due to the fertile nature of the land, vegetation is lush throughout the district. There are many mythological facts about the great historical heritage of the district of Bahraich<sup>8</sup>.

According to the 2001 census, the total population of Bahraich is 27.01 Lakhs, which represents 1.63 percent of the population of Uttar Pradesh. Population in the district grew 28.9 percent between 1991 and 2001 compared with 25.85 percent for the state. The relative population growth pressure in the district is higher as compared to the state. The number of females per thousand males was 868, which is lower in comparison to the state sex ratio of 898 and may be due to male migration. The population density of the district is 538 persons in per sq. km.

---

<sup>8</sup> It was famous as the capital of god Brahma, the maker of universe. It was also known as part of Gandharva forest. Even today northeast area of several hundred square kms of the district is covered by the forest. It is said that Brahmaji developed this forest-covered area as the place of worship for Rishi's and Sadhus. Therefore, this place comes to be known as Brahmaich.

The total population of scheduled castes in the district is 14.4 percent, which is lower than that of the state at 21.2 percent. The Scheduled tribes constitute 0.4 percent to the total population of the district. Only 8.7 percent of the population in the district lives in urban areas compared with 20.8 percent in the state.

The total literacy rate of the district is only 36.1 percent, which is far below the national literacy rate of 65 percent. Female literacy is only 33.1 percent.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the residents of the District of Bahraich. Wheat, Rice, Sugarcane, Pulse, Mustard are the major crops. Sericulture is also being developed in the district. The climate & soil here are very suitable for sericulture.

Bahraich is not a very developed district in terms of industry. The main industries here are based on agriculture and forest products. There are three sugar mills, in Nanpara, Jarwal and Chilwarya. Besides sugar, mills there are some rice and pulses mills. Pulses mills of Bahraich are quite famous for the latest techniques adopted by this industry. Besides those based on forest and agricultural products, Awadh wood products & Awadh fertilizers are also established here.

The economy of Bahraich is mainly agrarian in nature. 95040 hectares of land of the district are covered by dense forest. Trees like teak, Shisham and Khair are found here. As a result, "kattha" factories are situated in the Mihinpurwa block of Bahraich. Ideal wood for furniture and building is found here. Fruit trees grown here are mango and guava.

The principal crops of the region are wheat, rice, sugarcane, pulse, and mustard. Sericulture is another occupation of the people of the region. Bahraich is not well industrially developed. Most of the industries in this region are based on agricultural and forest products like sugar mills, rice and daal mills.

A little more than a quarter of the Muslim population of India resides in Uttar Pradesh. As numerous surveys and studies have shown, districts in UP with a relatively high Muslim population are considerably more deprived than other districts in terms of economic, educational and social conditions which reveal a certain pattern of discrimination and deprivation. One of the most deprived and a marginalized district in

Uttar Pradesh is Bahraich, which is located in the northeastern part of the state, bordering Nepal. The district has a Muslim population of some 22 percent. The district enjoys the dubious distinction of having the third lowest literacy rate in the state, which according to the 2001 census is a mere 35.79 percent. The literacy rate for Muslims is much lower than this, since Muslims in the district are a largely, economically highly deprived community.

#### **4.6.2 Socio-demographic Composition of Muslims in India**

Muslims constitute the second largest religious group in India and thus the largest religious minority. According to the 2001 census, there are over 138.2 million Muslims out of a total population of 1028.6 million, which accounts for 13.4 percent of the total population of the country (GOI, 2006).

Muslims in India reside all across the country and their concentration varies substantially. Out of the total Muslim population of the country, 31.8 million or 18.2 percent live in one state, Uttar Pradesh. Of course, Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state of India with 13 percent or 174.7 million of the total population of the country.

In the district of study, Bahraich, the proportion of Muslim population is 35 percent (945517), out of a total population of the UP state of 2701478 (Census, 2001).

According to the field survey, all respondents of the study area are males (Table 4.18). While considering the age structure of respondents by sex, 86 percent are between 15-59 years of age. The proportion of elderly Muslims is higher (12 percent) compared with 7.45 percent of the total population of the country.

**Table 4.18** Social and Demographic Composition of Respondents

		Male	Percent	Total	Percent
		50	100	50	100
Age group	0-14	1	2	1	2
	15-59	43	86	43	86
	60 +	6	12	6	12
	Total	50	100	50	100
Mother tongue					
	Urdu	50	100	50	100
	Total	50	100	50	100
Religion	Islam	50	100	50	100
Marital Status	Married	47	94	47	94
	Unmarried	3	6	9	6
	Total	50	100	50	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

An absolute majority of the Muslims speaks Urdu as their mother tongue and they follow Islam traditions. Besides Urdu, they speak Hindi, a national language of India and a vernacular in the Hindi- Urdu community spoken by over 38 million people, mainly in the Awadh region and in daily communication within and outside the community.

#### 4.6.2.1 Age and Sex Composition of the Family Members

Table 4.18 shows that the average Muslim household size in the study area is 6.2 persons, which is higher than the national average household size of 4.5 (National Sample Survey office, 2007). Male population is higher (52 percent) than the female population (48 percent). Out of the total population, 24.1 percent is under 10 years of age. A younger age distribution is an indication of a lag in population growth decline. A higher proportion of the young age group implies fewer numbers in the workforce resulting in greater pressure on households and the economy. The economically dependent population is around 45.4 percent, whereas the economically active

population is only 54.6 percent, lower than the national average of 60.3 percent (Census, 2001).

**Table 4.19** Population Composition of Family Members by Age and Sex

Age group	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
0-5	14	8.7	16	10.7	30	9.6
5-9	23	14.2	22	14.8	45	14.5
10-14	24	14.8	21	14.1	45	14.5
15- 20	33	20.4	29	19.5	62	19.9
21-40	31	19.1	29	19.5	60	19.3
41-60	25	15.4	23	15.4	48	15.4
60+	12	7.4	9	6.0	21	6.8
Total	162	100.0	149	100.0	311	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

The population above 60 years of age is not high for both the general population as well as the Muslim population, and thus old age dependency is quite low.

#### 4.6.2.2 Marital Status

Religion, occupation, culture, education and country law mainly determine the norms of marriage. Among the Muslim community, generally, early marriage is common throughout India and the field data support this. Out of the total population, 67 percent are married leaving 33 percent unmarried. Among the married population, female ratio is higher than the male showing that early marriage is higher among females compared with males.

**Table 4.20** Marital Status of Family Members by Sex (15 years of age and above)

Marital status	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Married	63	62.4	65	72.2	128	67.0
Unmarried	38	37.6	25	27.8	63	33.0
Total	101	100.0	90	100.0	191	100.0

**Source** Field Survey, 2011



### **4.6.3 Economic Condition**

The Muslim community is one of the poorest communities in India, ranking with the *dalits* and indigenous nationalities. Muslims hold approximately one-fifth of the land in the province. They tend to hold particularly large amounts of land around former centers of Muslim power such as Jaunpur, Allahabad, Fatehpur, Bareilly and Moradabad, Lucknow and Bara Banki (Khalidi, 2006).

#### **4.6.3.1 Land Holding**

The Muslim community is one of the most highly marginalized groups in India. According to the 2001 census, out of the total population of Muslims, 31 percent are living below the poverty line.

The economically backward position of Indian Muslims is also supported by the findings of the study. As shown in Table 4.20, all of the surveyed Muslim families have their own house but only 42 percent of Muslim households have agricultural land. Out of them, 16 percent have less than one Bigha of land, which is not sufficient for their livelihood, and only 6 percent of families have more than 10 Bigha of land. Because of agricultural landlessness and the marginal landholding situation, the majority of the Muslims are involved in the construction or agriculture sectors and small trade/business. They work as carpenters, masons, butchers, sweepers, barbers and mechanics.

**Table 4.21** Average Land Holding and House Types

	Average holding	No of families	Percent
Agricultural land holding	Landless	29	58
	0-1 Bigha	8	16
	1-5 Bigha	6	12
	5-10 Bigha	4	8
	10+	3	6
	Total	50	100
Houses	Yes	50	100
	No	-	-
	Total	50	100
Types of houses	Pakka	37	74
	Kacha	13	26
	Total	50	100
No of story	One storied	24	48
	Two Storied	19	38
	Three Storied	7	14
	Total	50	100

Source Field Survey, 2011

#### 4.6.3.2 Ownership of House

In terms of house ownership and types of houses, Indian Muslims are in a better position in comparison to Hindus and other caste/ethnic groups in the study area. All the surveyed Muslim families have their own house and out of them 74 percent have a Pakki (concrete/cemented) house and only 26 percent have a Kachi (wooden, hay and mud) house.

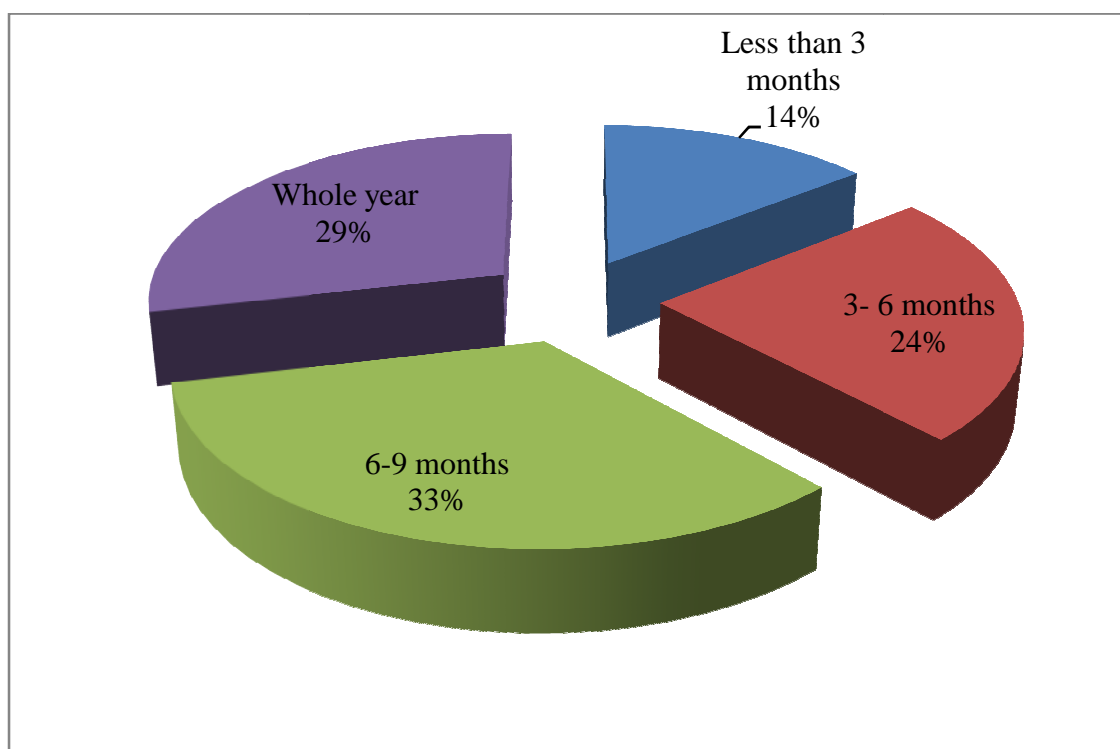
During the field survey, the condition of houses, construction material and number of storeys in a house were observed. The majority of houses have walls built with bricks, stone and timber with cement and mud plaster. It was also found that 48 percent of houses are uniplexes, 38 percent are duplexes and only 14 percent are triplexes in the village.

### 4.6.3.3 Agricultural Production and Food Sufficiency

In the study area, out of the total households surveyed, only 21 have agricultural land. They produce rice, maize, wheat, pulse, potato, buckwheat and oil seeds. A majority of the respondents said that their agricultural production is not sufficient for the whole year. Only 14.3 percent of respondents said that their production covers the households for 3 months. 33.3 percent respondents could sustain their households for 6- 9 months a year. On the other hand, only 28.7 percent respondents revealed that their food production is enough for a whole year. A majority of the Muslims have no other choice than to buy daily necessities from the market or borrow from the neighbor to survive, thus putting great constraints on them.

According to the survey, the average number of food sufficiency months among Muslims is around 7 months. Borrowing, obtaining help from relatives, buying food from non-farm income are the main livelihood strategies to make up the food deficit.

**Figure 4.5** Food Production Sufficiency



**Source** Field Survey, 2011

*Note: 29 Households are agricultural landless and they are not included in this table.*

#### 4.6.3.4 Occupation

Wage labor is the main occupation of Muslims in the study area of India. Mainly they are involved in construction as well as agriculture as laborers in Rupediya (India) and Nepalgunj municipality of Nepal. The Nepalgunj municipality is 10 km away. Therefore, a majority of them work in Nepalgunj in the construction sector as masons, carpenters, plumbers and laborers.

A few Muslims have been running small businesses such as tea shops, mobile repair centers, fruit, meat, textile and garment shops in Rupediya and in Nepalgunj municipality as well.

Those who have agricultural land are engaged in agricultural related occupations. They produce rice, wheat, potato and green vegetables. Their representation in government jobs is negligible. A majority of the women are engaged in domestic work such as child rearing and looking after domestic animals, and gardening.

**Table 4.22** Distribution of Population by Occupation (15 years of age and above)

Occupation	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Student	13	12.9	6	6.7	19	9.9
Agriculture	15	14.9	5	5.6	20	10.5
Trade/Business	14	13.9	3	3.3	17	8.9
Wage labor	33	32.7	7	7.8	40	20.9
Rickshaw/Tanga puller	12	11.9	-	-	12	6.3
Gov. job	7	6.9	-	-	7	3.7
Domestic work	-	-	66	73.3	66	34.6
Non occupation	7	6.9	3	3.3	10	5.2
Total	101	100	90	100	191	100

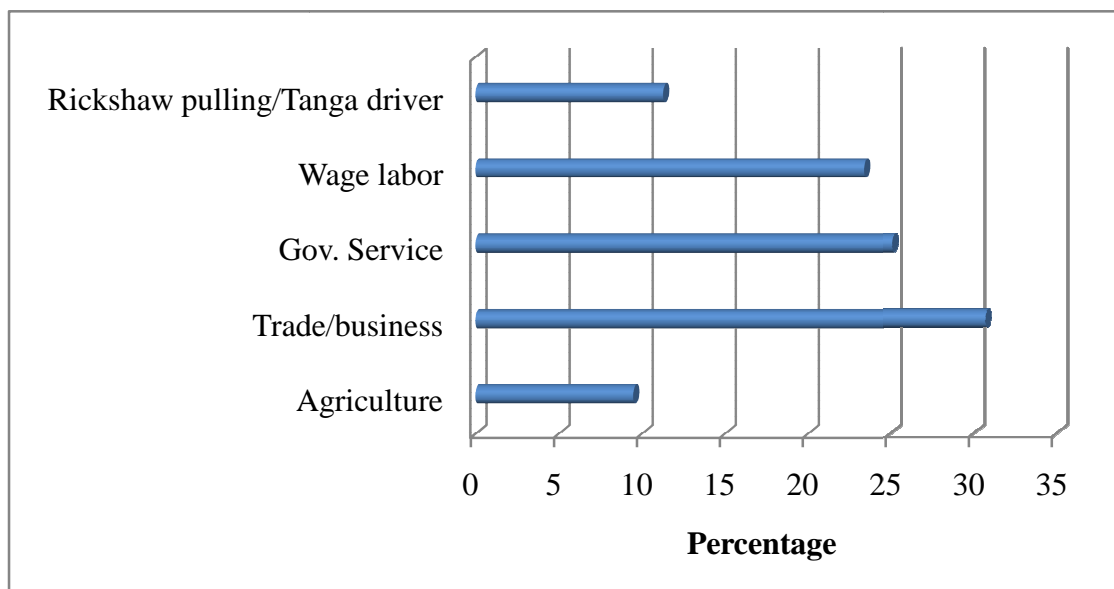
Source Field Survey, 2011

#### 4.6.3.5 Sources of Income

The economic status of a family can be gaged through an analysis of their income and expenditures. The main source of income of a Muslim community is agriculture, trade, service and wage labor. The two most important sources of income in the study area are

a trade / business and wage labor. Trade/business contributes 30.7 percent, wage labor contributes 23.4 percent and agriculture contributes only 9.5 percent to their income.

**Figure 4.6** Average Contributions to Family Income from Different Sources



Source Field Survey, 2011

The Muslim representation in government services is significant in number, which contributes around 25.1 percent to their monthly income (Figure 4.6 and Table 4.23). The majority of females are engaged in household chores.

**Table 4.23** Average Monthly Income from Different Sources of Income

Sources of income	Total income (In Rs)	Contribution to their income (in percent)
Agriculture	40,000	9.5
Trade/business	1,30,000	30.7
Gov. Service	1,06,500	25.1
Wage Labor	99,000	23.4
Rickshaw pulling/Tanga driver	48,000	11.3
Total	4,23,500	100
Average monthly household income	8,470	

Source Field Survey, 2011

As shown in table 4.23 an average monthly income per household from various sources is Rs. 8,470 and annual income is Rs. 1,01,640.

#### 4.6.3.6 Expenditure

A large amount of expenditure goes to meet the expenses of purchasing food items, followed by cloth, health, festivals/ceremonies, travel, kerosene, electricity, telephone and education.

An analysis of the expenditures shows that Muslims have either less preference for education or are not in a position to spend money on it. In India, primary school education is free and the students receive stipends for school uniforms, books and stationery. Government schools also provide midday meals for students.

**Table 4.24** Average Monthly and Annual Household Expenditure (in Rs.)

S.No	Particulars	Monthly	Annual
1	Food	3,700	44,400
2	Education	680	8,160
3	Cloths	750	9,000
4	Health	450	5,400
5	Festivals/ceremonies	500	6,000
6	Entertainment	250	3,000
7	Agriculture(seeds, fertilizer)	140	1,680
8	Travel	400	4,800
9	Electricity	190	2,280
10	Telephone	150	1,800
11	Kerosene	220	2,640
	Total	7,430	89,160

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

#### **4.6.4 Drinking Water Facilities and Health Service**

As far as drinking water facilities are concerned private and public hand pumps are the most popular sources in the sample villages for obtaining water for domestic requirements.

It is found that a majority of the Muslim households have drinking water facilities and the main source of drinking water is a tube well. More than 75 percent of households said that private hand pumps are the main source of drinking water. However, the remaining households use public tube wells and piped water. Drinking water directly from tube wells (underground water) is not a desirable phenomenon from a public health perspective; however people are forced to use it in the absence of an alternative. Therefore, a majority of the Muslims have no safe drinking water facilities available to them. Because of the low quality of drinking water, they are suffering from various skin related diseases and diarrhea.

In order to access various health services the people of the sampled villages have to go to the block headquarters. During fieldwork, it was observed that sanitation is somewhat poorer among the Muslim community in comparison to Hindus in the village with the result that they are less immune to the diseases. There is no sub-center in the village but there is a hospital in Rupediya Bazaar. The average distance to the hospital is 2-3 km. About half of the total villages are connected via pakki or semi-pakki roads to the hospital.

It was observed that all kinds of medical facilities are available in the hospital but they are not properly equipped to serve the people. The hospital is equipped with an X-ray machine and facilities for blood and medical checkups and minor operations.

The hospital provides free medical check-ups and medicine for community people for minor problems but there is a cost for addressing major problems and surgery. During the field survey, one out of three Muslim households reported that one or more of their family members fell sick during the previous year. When asked about what they had done once they realized the sickness of their family members, almost all respondents

said that they went to the hospital. They reported that vomiting, diarrhea, tuberculosis, dry cough, and skin related diseases are common in the study area.

During the group discussion, they said that the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), and Aids and Sexual health awareness (ASHA) visit the village weekly. Both play an important role in spreading awareness among rural people regarding family welfare, child and maternity health care vaccination and hygiene within the village itself. As far as other medical staff, concerned most visit either monthly, quarterly, half yearly or rarely.

#### **4.6.5 Educational Facilities**

In the sample village of Sajana Gram Panchayat, there is one government primary school and one private school. Children from the Panchayat have access to education through this school. Both schools are located in the middle of the villages and are linked with kachi motorable roads.

Average distance to the primary school is maximum 500 meters. There are no high schools or colleges within the village. Therefore, after the completion of their primary level of education, children are sent to Neharu Smarak Inter College, Ram Janaki inter College or Simanta Inter College in Rupediya for further education. The average distance of these schools to the villages is around one and half kilometers.

#### **4.6.6 Education Condition**

Education is a fundamental human capital and one of the most important indicators of Socio-economic status of a person and the development of people, communities and the nation as a whole. The educational characteristic among the family members of sample households is that 70.5 percent of Muslims are literate which is higher than the overall national literacy rate of 65 percent and the national Muslim literacy rate of 59.1 percent. There is no big gap between the literacy rates of males and females. The main reason of their high literacy rate is Madrasa educated are also included in this category.

Out of the total literate population, 29.9 percent are in primary and below primary level, 14.2 percent in high school and only 5.3 percent are in graduate and above level



programs. These data highlight the overall educational situation and declining rate in higher-level education among the Muslims.

**Table 4.25** Educational Condition of Muslims by Sex (5 years of age and above)

<b>Education Attainment/ Level of education</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Illiterate	42	28.4	41	30.8	83	29.5
Literate	18	12.2	17	12.8	35	12.6
Primary	41	27.7	43	32.3	84	29.9
High school	22	14.8	18	13.5	40	14.2
Intermediate	15	10.2	9	6.8	24	8.5
Graduates and above	10	6.7	5	3.8	15	5.3
Total	148	100	133	100	281	100
	37.7	71.6	32.7	69.2		70.5

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

From the gender perspective, Muslim female children are in a disadvantaged situation as compared with their male counterparts. The illiteracy rate of females is higher than males counterparts. Table 4.25 clearly shows that the female literacy rate is lower in comparison to males among Muslims. In terms of higher education, the number of females is insignificant.

#### **4.6.7 Flow of Muslim Children in Different Schooling System**

Table 4.26 shows the real picture of the flow of Muslim children in educational institutions. Out of the total number of school aged children, the majority (77.8 percent) are studying in some type of school at the time of this study and the remaining children are not studying in any educational institution.

**Table 4.26** Different Educational Institutions going Children by Age and Sex

Age group	Government School going			Private school going			Madrasa going			Not going		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
5-9	14	13	27	3	1	4	4	5	9	2	3	5
10-14	11	8	19	5	2	7	1	3	4	7	8	15
Total	25	21	46	8	3	11	5	8	13	9	11	20
Percent	54.3	45.7	51.1	72.7	27.3	12.2	38.5	61.5	14.4	45	55	22.2

Source Field Survey, 2011

From the gender perspective, Muslims give high priority to their male child's education. In the study area, it was found that in all the different schools the number of boys attending is higher by 8 percent compared with girls whereas 10 percent of boys and 12.2 percent girls are still out of school.

Out of the total, a majority of the children are studying in government schools. A large portion of children (27.3 percent) are studying in private schools with only 14.4 percent studying in Madrasa. During the field survey, the respondents said that economically poor families sent their children to government school and Madrasa. However, economically well-off and educated families sent their children to private schools. They teach religious education to their children in their home by hiring Maulvis during morning and/or evening hours.

From the gender perspective, more boys are studying in government schools compared with girls. However, the case was quite the opposite with the Madrasas where 61.5 percent of the students were girls and 38.5 percent were boys.

#### 4.6.8 Reasons for Not Going to School and their Engagement Areas

Out of the total of school aged children, around 22 percent were found out of school or not going to any educational institutions for education. While, out of this, a few had never attended school, the majority were dropouts. A majority of the Muslims reported that poverty is the main cause for not going to school.

Those children not attending school are engaged in various areas. There was a gender-based difference in the engagement of such children. A large number of girls are engaged in domestic works, while a large number of boys are engaged in wage earning and agricultural work in the home. An equal number of boys and girls do no work at all. Their parents stated that they were not given any responsibility because of their unripe age. Other areas of engagement for boys are tailor, barber and carpenter. However, the percentage of boys involved in these sectors is very small.

#### **4.7 Socio-economic Conditions of Nepalese and Indian Muslims: A Comparative Analysis**

Socio-economic status attainment around the world is the achievement aspect of human behavior across the social systems. An individual with his or her personal socioeconomic status attainment not only occupies a certain status in the family, group, community or wider society but also acquires certain prestige through which s/he meets his or her day-to-day human needs and solves personal, physical, mental and social problems faced in a particular environment (Uddin, 2009).

Socioeconomic status is an assessment of a person's education, occupation and income position within a particular social system (Eshleman & Cashion, 1985). Likewise, socio-economic status attainment refers to the achievement of a person's relative position of education, occupation and income within that particular social system. This section focuses on a comparison of socio-economic and educational conditions between the Nepalese and Indian Muslims. For this, only the main indicators of socio-demographics (age and sex composition, religion, mother tongue, marital status), economic (occupation, land holding, income and expenditure) and educational (literacy rate, educational attainment, flow of children in the different education system, access to educational institutions etc.) are presented and discussed.

##### **4.7.1 Socio-demographic Composition**

Muslims comprise a large proportion of the national population (13.4 percent) in India of which 22 percent is in Uttar Pradesh, which has the highest Muslim population of any state in India. The Muslim population in Nepal is lower in comparison to India.

The total Muslim population of Nepal is only 4.2 percent of the total population of which 21 percent is in Banke district, the highest Muslim populated district in the country. The Muslims in Nepal and India reside throughout the country and their concentration varies substantially.

During the study period, a majority of the respondents were Males in both countries due to their religious and cultural constraints and sensitivity. In the study area of Nepal, 40 percent represented the population below 14 years of age, known as the dependent age group, 4.6 percent were 60 years of age and above and 55.6 percent represented the economically active population, which is lower than the national average of 60.3 percent. Likewise, in the same age categories, the Indian Muslim population is 45.4 percent, 6.8 percent, and 38.6 percent, respectively. The population of school aged children between 5-14 years is 31.1 percent in Nepal and 29 percent in India.

Among the Muslims, the proportion of the elderly population is lower than the national average, which shows that their life expectancy is lower than the national average due to their low level of education, low income, low paid occupation and lack of health awareness and facilities, and accumulated stresses in the study areas.

The average household size among the Muslims in the study area is higher than the national average in both countries due to the restriction of family planning, early marriage and polygyny (the last indicator being negligible). Early marriage is common among the Muslims and family planning is completely prohibited by religion among Muslims.

Mother tongue and religion reflects not only the cultural identity of groups of people but also the politics of language and the concepts of the secular state. Both Muslim groups from Nepal and India are followers of Islam and are Urdu and Awadhi language speakers. Urdu is the mode of education in Madrasa throughout Nepal and India. Nepali Indian Muslims have both adopted the dominant language of the respective regions. For instance, Muslims residing in eastern Terai from Sarlahi district use Maithili language, while for those living in the central Terai (Bara, Parsa and Rautahat) Bhojpuri is their mother tongue. Besides their mother tongue, Nepali Muslims speak Nepali, the national language and Urdu, in communication with other Muslims. However, the majority of Muslims still cannot speak Nepali properly. Similarly, Indian

Muslims speak Hindi, the national language of India, and Urdu for daily communication, which is the medium of instruction in the Madrasas in both countries.

Marriage is one of the main institutions of society. Marriage systems vary in different communities and in the society dictated mostly by religion, occupation, culture, education and national laws. Although child marriage is not legal, early marriage is common among Muslims in both countries. The married population is higher in India than in Nepal with 67 percent and 52 percent of the total Muslim population being married, respectively. Among the married population, female ratio is higher than the male in both countries, which shows that early marriage is higher among females in comparison to males.

#### **4.7.2 Educational Conditions of Muslims**

The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress is well accepted today. Education plays a significant role in the dissemination of modern attitudes, values, approaches and a rational outlook. Educational attainment is a basic criterion not only to acquire social status in the family but also in the wider community. But, the literacy rate among Muslim communities is very low in comparison to national literacy rates in both Nepal and India. The interim constitution of Nepal, 2007, under the fundamental rights, clearly states that every citizen shall have the right to receive free education from the State up to secondary level as provided for in the law. Likewise, at the time of adopting the Constitution, the Indian state had committed itself to providing elementary education under article 45 of the Directive Principles of the state policy<sup>9</sup>. Subsequently, in 2002 education as a fundamental right was endorsed through the 86th amendment to the Constitution, which was already modified in Article 45<sup>10</sup>. However, despite these commitments, the number of children out of school in this age group is alarmingly large in both countries.

According to the Human Development Report (2009), there is a huge gap between male and female literacy rates in Nepal. National male literacy rate is 81.0 percent

---

<sup>9</sup> Article 45 stated that the state shall endeavor to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years

<sup>10</sup> Article 21-A states that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age six to fourteen years in such a way as the State may, by law, determine. The 86<sup>th</sup> Amendment also modified Article 45, which now reads, as the state shall endeavor to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6 years.

whereas female literacy rate is only 54.5 percent. The Muslim female literacy rate is only 26.5 percent whereas among Dalits, the lowest caste groups, female literacy rate is 34.8 percent. Many factors restrict access to education for Muslim girls and women. Some of these restrictions are a lack of Muslim female teachers in schools either in public or private sector schools, lack of participation of Muslim women in school management committees, lack of a Muslim-friendly environment in schools, lack of Muslim cultural considerations in schools and lack of incentives and scholarships for Muslims.

In India, the literacy rate of Muslims is higher than for Nepali Muslims. The central government of India has taken initiatives to educate children of minorities. There are no targeted programs for Muslims, however, because of their minority status in the community, they are benefit from those programs. The government has initiated a Mid Day Meal (MDM) scheme<sup>11</sup>, which has proven to be an effective means to reduce the high dropout rates of children from economically weaker sections, while also addressing their nutritional needs.

According to Saihjee (2003), in a recent survey, almost all schools (95 percent) in Tamil Nadu reported that the noon meal program has helped to increase enrollment and retention of girls. The mid-day meal program has brought about a sharp increase in school enrollment and attendance rates across all the states and more importantly narrowing the gender gaps in school attendance rates (Kameshwari, 2003 cited in Singh, M., & Mishra, N. 2010).

In India, Minority Affairs provides three types of scholarships<sup>12</sup> for minority group students including Muslims. According to UP, Bihar figures from 2011-12, the

---

<sup>11</sup> On the basis of the philosophy that when children have to sit in class with empty stomachs, they can not focus on learning. The scheme is important for improving enrolment, attendance and retention of primary school children, while simultaneously improving their nutritional status.

<sup>12</sup> (I) Pre-Matric (ii) Post-Matric (iii) Merit & Means. The first is for students from Classes 1 – 10, the second from Class XI right up to Ph.D, and the third for vocational or professional studies. Only those who have obtained more than 50percent marks in the previous final exam are eligible for the scholarships. For Pre-Matric, the total annual family income should not exceed Rupees One Lakh; for Post-Matric, it should be below Rupees Two Lakhs, and for Merit & Means it should be below Rupees Two Lakhs Fifty Thousand. Pre-Matric scholars will be paid Rs 1000/- directly into their bank accounts by way of maintenance. School fees will be paid into the school account, with specific criteria for admission fees and monthly tuition fees. Hostellers will get an additional payment. For Post-Matric the maintenance allowance increases from Rs 1400/- p.a. to Rs 3300/-. The cap for fees for Classes XI and XII is Rs 7000/-, while for XI and XII vocational classes it is Rs 10,000/-, and for college studies it is Rs 3000/-.

distribution of Post-Matric scholarships in Bihar, the Muslim target was 38,011 and achievement was 42,672, Christian was 157 but received only 33, Sikh 53 and achieved 46, Buddhist 53 and achieved 14, Parsi two and achieved nil. In UP, Muslim 85, 181 students received scholarships against a target of 1,34,293. Another notable program, Antyodaya Anna Yojana<sup>13</sup>, is popular in the study area. This is an important milestone in providing food grains to the poor families at a highly subsidized rate. Muslims in the study area have benefitted from the program, encouraging them to send their children to school.

To Some extent, these kinds of programs have encouraged and helped Muslims to send their children to school. However, such incentive schemes and programs for Muslims are grossly lacking in Nepal.

On the other hand, the overall level of education, particularly in the secondary and higher level is very low in both the countries. However, there is a big difference in the level of education between males and females among Nepali Muslims in comparison to Indian Muslims where the dropout rate among Muslim communities is very high in comparison to other caste/ethnic groups. There are several factors and causes for the dropout rate of Muslim children from schools. The common factors between both countries are poverty, lack of awareness and low literacy rate among Muslim parents, lack of mother tongue education, lack of job opportunity, and lack of scholarships for higher education, lack of an accommodating syllabus, textual material on cultural aspects of Muslims in schools and early marriage among Muslims.

---

The Merit & Means is the most attractive. Out of 60,000 such scholarships 7620 (13percent) are for Christians, with Kerala being allotted the maximum of 1917, followed by Tamilnadu with 1197. Here the maintenance is Rs 5000/- p.a. and course fee is reimbursable up to Rs 20,000/-.

<sup>13</sup> Antyodaya Anna Yojana has been launched by the Honorable Prime Minister of India on the 25th December, 2000 to ensure food security for all, create a hunger free India in the next five years and to reform and improve the Public Distribution System so as to serve the poorest of the poor in rural and urban areas

**Table 4.27** Literacy Rate and Level of Education by Sex (5 years of age and above)

	Nepal			India		
Education Attainment	Male	Female	Mean	Male	Female	Mean
Illiterate	32.2	46.9	38.5	28.4	30.8	29.5
Literate	15.8	18.3	16.9	12.2	12.8	12.5
Primary	23.4	19.4	21.7	27.7	32.3	29.9
Secondary	16.8	9.2	13.6	14.8	13.5	14.2
Intermediate	4.3	2.2	3.4	10.2	6.8	8.5
Graduates and above	3.0	1.0	2.1	6.7	3.8	5.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

In Nepal, gender parity in education stands now at 0.98 at both basic and secondary levels and the increase in overall enrollment is accompanied by a reduction of gender and caste/ethnic disparities. However, gender inequalities, together with low enrollment rates at the primary and secondary level<sup>14</sup> remain very high in Dalit and Muslim communities. The GON has attempted to bring all girls and boys from disadvantaged and marginalized populations into mainstream education by providing free tuition, free textbooks and scholarships. Nevertheless, the enrollment rate of Muslim girls and boys, those from poor families and those with disabilities, remain low (CBS, 2004, NLSS II, 2003-04).

From the gender perspective, higher-level education attainment situation of Muslim women in both countries is very low in comparison to their male counterparts and other community groups. The main reasons of low literacy rate and higher-level dropout rates of girls in the schools are the prevalence of poverty, early marriage, orthodoxy, *purdah* system and customary laws of the Muslim society. Unlike Hindu women, Muslim women are far behind in education, social mobility and status in the society. There are many social taboos in Muslim society. Prohibition on family planning further contributes to the poverty and health of Muslim women. Prohibition on social mobility

<sup>14</sup> Where only 20 percent of boys and girls are enrolled in primary education and six percent of them in secondary education, whereas among indigenous nationalities the ratio is 39 percent and 38 percent, respectively (Doe, Flash Report 1, 2010-11)



to Muslim women leads to confining themselves in the household. The class status has some positive impact in this regard. Muslim women from rich families are more restricted by *burka* and have less mobility outside the household whereas those belonging to poorer families in rural area could not afford to obey this custom because poverty demands them to work outside, particularly in farming. Because of *pardah* and *burka* system, Muslim women's representation and participation in the public domain is negligible in comparison to women from other communities and particularly Hindu women of both countries.

### 4.7.3 Flow of Muslim Children in Different Schooling Systems

Table 4.28 shows that out of the total of school-aged children of Muslims, 79.6 percent from Nepal and 77.8 percent from India were studying in some type of school at the time of this study and the remaining were not studying in any educational institutions at all.

**Table 4.28** Different Educational Institutions Going Children by Age and Sex

		Nepal			India		
	Age group	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Government school going	5-9	38	26	64	14	13	27
	10-15	74	67	141	11	8	19
	Total	112	93	205	25	21	46
	Percent	54.6	45.4	41.3	54.3	45.7	51.1
Private school going	5-9	7	3	10	3	1	4
	10-15	13	6	19	5	2	7
	Total	20	9	29	8	3	11
	Percent	69.0	31.0	5.9	72.7	27.3	12.2
Madrasa going	5-9	38	18	56	4	5	9
	10-15	37	68	105	1	3	4
	Total	75	86	161	5	8	13
	Percent	46.6	53.4	32.5	38.5	61.5	14.4
Not going	5-9	22	19	41	2	3	5
	10-15	34	26	60	7	8	15
	Total	56	45	101	9	11	20
	Percent	55.5	44.5	20.4	45	55	22.2

Source Field Survey, 2011

Both in Nepal and India, a majority of the Muslim children are studying in government schools rather than other educational institutions. The total number of students in this category is higher in India than in Nepal because of the Central government of India's schemes for minority groups such as scholarships, reservation in government services, Mid Day meal in schools and Antyodaya Anna Yojana. These programs have definitely played a significant role in increasing the literacy rate among the minority groups. However, the educational situation among Muslims is still far below the national average because of their poverty, lack of awareness/ education and religious orthodoxy.

The Government of Nepal has not introduced and implemented these kinds of incentive scheme and programs for Muslims except scholarships provided to all female students in government schools.

Madrassa education is prevalent among poor and orthodox Muslims in Nepal and India as well. However, there is a big difference in the number of students in this category between two countries. In Nepal, out of the total, 32.5 percent of children receive education from the Madrasas while in India only 14.4 percent receive education from Madrasa. In this category, the percentage of female students is higher than males in both countries.

During the field survey, Nepali Muslim respondents said that economically poor families send their children to Madrasa only but a majority of the middle class families sends their children to government schools as well as Madrasas. During the early morning hours, children go to Madrasa for religious education and in the daytime, they go to the government schools for secular education. A few economically well-off and educated families send their children to English medium private schools as well. The percentage in this category is higher in India than Nepal. After the registration of Madrasas at the district education office (DEO) and the introduction of mainstream subjects like English, mathematics and science in Madrasas, the enrollment rate of Muslim children has increased significantly. However, in India, no such provisions were found during the field visit.

#### **4.7.4 Economic Condition**

The Muslim community is one of the most highly marginalized and excluded groups in terms of social, cultural, educational, economic and political spheres in Nepal and India. Economically Muslims are very poor with 41 percent of Nepali Muslims living below the poverty line against the national average of 31 percent. Likewise, 31 percent of Indian Muslims live below the poverty line (NCAER, 2004-5), which is 6 percent higher than the national average of 25 percent (CIA World Fact books, 2011).

The economically backward status of Muslims in both countries is clearly reflected in the findings of the study. Almost all surveyed Muslim families have their own house but in terms of construction materials, number of stories and conditions of the house, Indian Muslims are in a better position than Nepali Muslims.

Out of all the households, about 68.6 percent of Nepali Muslims and 58 percent Indian Muslims are landless. The difference in land holding between Nepali and Indian Muslims is only 10 percent. The majority of the households from both groups have marginal land, less than one Bigha. However, the proportion owning five bigha of land or more is higher among the Indian Muslims in comparison to Nepal (Table 4.29). These data clearly indicate that very few Muslims in either country have sufficient agricultural land for their livelihood.

**Table 4.29** Average Land and House Holding among Muslims of Nepal and India

		Nepal		India	
	Average holding	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agricultural land holding	Landless	240	68.6	29	58
	0-1 Bigha	44	12.6	8	16
	1-5 Bigha	39	11.1	6	12
	5-10 Bigha	16	4.6	4	8
	10+	11	3.1	3	6
	Total	350	100	50	100
Houses	Yes	345	98.6	50	100
	No	5	1.2	-	-
	Total	350	100	50	100
Types of houses	Cemented	55	15.7	30	60
	Wooden	33	9.4	7	14
	Tin	45	12.9	5	10
	Mud and Hay	217	62.0	8	16
	Total	350	100	50	100
No of stories	One storied	299	85.4	24	48
	Two storied	36	10.3	19	38
	Three storied	15	4.3	7	14
	Total	350	100	50	100
House Ownership	Self	335	95.7	50	100
	Other family members	10	2.9	-	-
	Rented	5	1.4		
	Total	350	100		

Source Field Survey, 2011

#### 4.7.5 Occupation

Table 4.30 presents data on the occupational status of Muslims in both countries. Family occupation is the main indicator of the economic condition, living standard and social status in the society. Child education is directly determined by the parent's

occupation, income and education. The literacy rate and educational attainment level among Muslim children is lower than for other groups in both countries due to their involvement in low paid jobs and the low income situation of the parents.

In the study area, wage labor is the main occupation of Muslims. Majorities of Muslims are landless; therefore, they are involved in wage labor and other occupations, mainly in road and building constructions as well as in the agricultural sector in their villages and in Nepalgunj municipality, Banke. They work as masons, carpenters, plumbers and laborers in this sector. The Indian Muslims from Rupediya also work as construction laborers in Nepalgunj. There are no restrictions preventing them from entering Nepal because of the open border and so trade/business is the second profession among Muslims of Nepal and India. Muslims of both countries are involved in cross-border trade such as rice, onion, potato, sugar, clothes, cooking utensils and cycles. Rupediya is considered to be a cheap shopping market for Nepalese. In the daytime, Indian Muslims come to Nepalgunj to sell tomato, potato, onion, sugar and cloths. Besides this, few Muslims run small teashops, mobile repair centers, fruit shops, meat shops and cloths shops in Nepalgunj municipality, Nepal and Rupediya, India.

**Table 4.30** Distribution of Respondents by Occupation (15 years of age and above)

Occupation	Nepal		India	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Student	3	0.9	-	0
Agriculture	31	8.9	8	16
Trade/Business	71	20.3	11	22
Wage labor	108	30.9	16	32
Rickshaw/Tanga puller	65	18.6	5	10
Gov. Job	5	1.4	4	8
Butcher	35	10.0	-	-
Domestic chores	27	7.7	2	4
Dependent/no occupation	5	1.4	4	8
Total	350	100	50	100

Source Field Survey, 2011

Overall, the distribution pattern by main occupation is not very different. The main difference is in the proportions of students, agriculture and government jobs. The proportion of those engaged in agriculture is lower among Nepali Muslims than Indian Muslims. However, the engagement in government jobs is negligible in both countries.

### 4.7.6 Agricultural Production and Food Sufficiency

Muslims of both countries produce rice, maize, wheat, millet, pulse, potato, and oil seeds mainly for their consumption. Only a few Muslim households earn profit from the agricultural production. In the study area, the majority of the Muslims are small farmers, having less than three Bigha of land and have insufficient food from their production.

**Table 4.31** Food Production Sufficiency

		Nepal		India	
		No.	Percent	No	Percent
Food Sufficiency	3 months or less	41	37.3	3	14.3
	3- 6 months	36	32.7	5	23.8
	6-9 months	19	17.3	7	33.3
	A whole year	14	12.7	6	28.6
	Total	110	100	21	100

**Source** Field Survey, 2011

Food sufficiency status between the both Muslim groups of Nepal and India is very poor. Among the Nepali Muslims, only 12.7 percent of households produce sufficient foods for the whole year but in India 28.6 percent have sufficient food production for their family. 37.3 percent of respondents said that the production is sufficient only for 3 months but among the Indian Muslims only 14.3 percent families are in this category.

According to the survey, the average number of food sufficiency months among Muslims is between six to seven. Borrowing, obtaining help from relatives, buying food from non-farm income are the main livelihood strategies to make up for the food deficit in both communities.

### 4.7.7 Interrelationship between Social, Economic and Educational Status Attainment

Social institutions are equally important in society to maintain social solidarity, unity and prosperity among the individuals, groups and communities. Education is one of the

most important social institutions in society, helping to socialize children, transfer culture and knowledge from generation to generation and strengthen competency for a better quality of life. However, there is an interrelationship between family, marriage, religion, education, economic and political institutions. Therefore, Child Education is determined by their religion, culture, and economy, which is more prevalent among the Muslims. Similarly, parent's education, occupation and income are the main determinants for child education.

The data show that the literacy rate among Muslims is lower than the national average from the perspective of government and mainstream education. If Madrasa education are counted as an education category then Muslim literacy rate will be higher but the governments of Nepal and India never considered Madrasa education as an educational attainment. Therefore, the situation has not changed much among the Muslims. In Nepal, Muslims are more rigid with respect to their religion. Therefore, they prefer to send their children to Madrasa rather than government schools to fulfill their religious and cultural needs. However, the situation of Indian Muslims is better in comparison to Nepalese Muslims. In India, the majority Muslims send their children to government schools rather than Madrasas.

This study establishes that a majority of the wealthy and educated parents prefer to send their children to government or private schools. They teach Islamic education at home by appointing maulana/molvies as tutors.

#### **4.7.8 Educational Attainment and Its Relation to Employment and other Sectors**

Muslims are considered to be one of the most highly marginalized groups in Nepal and India. Their educational level is below the national average due to educational disparity in the country and their low access to education. The economic marginalization of Muslims in Nepal and India has had a direct bearing on the educational downfall, which, in turn, has marginalized Muslims in terms of qualification for government jobs and other sectors. In Nepal, because of poor education, Muslims have been excluded from government jobs, health services, politics and other decision-making institutions.

The education system in Nepal is characterized by large disparities in primary and secondary school attendance. School attendance rates are higher among boys, residents of urban areas, children from wealthier families and higher caste groups. Disparities are also closely linked to the Hindu caste system that divides the population into different hierarchical hereditary groups<sup>15</sup>.

In Nepal, the economic marginalization and social exclusion of Muslims started after the unification of Nepal in 1768 and the introduction of *Muluki Ain* in 1854. The Country Code classified Muslims as “impure but touchable” and placed them into the Hindu hierarchical caste system (Hofer, 2004). Muslims were discriminated by virtue of belonging to a religious minority in a Hindu state and ranked above Dalits but below other groups.

Prior to 1940, Muslims were not allowed to attend any schools. During the 1940s, Muslims were allowed to attend secondary schools, and colleges and the Rana government eventually opened a Muslim primary school. With the declaration of free primary education up to class 5 for all Nepalese children, the number of Muslims attending schools has steadily increased (Ansari, 1981). Still today, the educational condition of Nepalese Muslims is far behind that of high caste and other groups. They have low access to state resources and low representation in government services and other decision-making positions due to their low educational attainment and lack of inclusive policy of the state.

In India, Muslims are in a better position in comparison to Nepalese Muslims in the field of government education, jobs, politics and other decision making level. In the past, in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, Muslims enjoyed a greater percentage of the judicial and executive jobs than their numbers warranted. In 1882, Muslims held nearly 35percent of all government posts. In 1886, Muslims held 45.1percent of the total number of posts in the judicial and executive services of the North Western Provinces and Oudh. In contrast, Hindus held only 50.2percent of these posts, even though they constituted 86.2percent of the total population (Misra, 1961).

---

<sup>15</sup> At the top of the social order are members of the Brahman class of priests and scholars, followed by the Chhetri (rulers and warriors), the Vaishya (merchants), and the Sudra (peasants and manual laborers). The lowest position in the social order is occupied by the Dalits, also referred to as "untouchables."



One of the issues that must be considered is that the Muslim service class and the gentry had held aloof from modern education, for reasons of pride as self-perceived former rulers, religious taboos, fear of identity loss and the like. After an initial reluctance, Muslims did take to modern education, spurred by the efforts of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his colleagues in the Aligarh movement (Mann, 1992). By the late 1860s, the proportion of Muslims in the government primary and secondary schools was as large as their percentage in the population and their percentage in higher education rose similarly by 1890s (Maqbool, 1969).

The downturn in education began with a bureaucratic reform initiated by U.P. Lieutenant Governor Anthony MacDonnell, a reform that resulted in adverse consequences for the Muslim elite.

There are huge differences between Muslims and others in higher education. The disparity in graduation attainment levels has been widening between Muslims and all others in both rural and urban areas since the 1970s. In the initial phases of planning, Muslims had a higher Graduate Attainment Rate than SCs and STs. That has now changed and the latter has overtaken the Muslims. Muslim disadvantage must be related to a number of factors including, of course, their economic status and generally low educational levels.

But, the latter may be in part also due to the lack of employment opportunities. This is partially supported by the data, which shows that the unemployment rate among Muslim graduates is the highest among socio-religious communities, both poor and not poor. It must also be read in light of the fact that Muslims do not see education as necessarily translating into formal employment. They are badly represented in formal employment and there is a perception that they will be discriminated against, as Muslims, in securing salaried jobs. Thus, the low perceived returns from education do not help the cause of retention of Muslims in the education system.

### **Conclusion**

Muslims constitute 4.3 percent of the national population of Nepal and 13.4 percent of the total population of India. In Nepal, Muslims have long been ignored by the state.

Nepal's social structure defined by the caste system, social discrimination, social inequality, government's "melting pot" policy and non-recognition of Madrasa education has become the most crucial impediment against inclusion. The societal norms in which the cultural practice of untouchability continues to vary regionally where conservatives are bent to preserve the tradition as their customary rights.

This empirical research, overall, suggests that Muslims are amongst the most marginalized communities in Nepal and India in terms of social, economic and educational indices and in terms of political empowerment. The economic situation of Muslims in both of the counties is almost similar. However, the educational condition and degree of awareness is higher among Indian Muslims compared to Nepalese Muslims. We can analyze Muslim exclusion from three crucial dimensions; socio-cultural, economic and political. In addition, marginalization and discrimination also contribute to the social exclusion of Muslims.

The literacy rate and educational status of Muslims is far below the national average and this gulf is wider for women. There is a significant disparity between the educational status of Muslims and that of other hill Brahmans and other caste or ethnic groups. Both mean years of schooling and attendance levels among Muslims are low in absolute numbers.

In higher education, the differences between Muslims and others stand out even more sharply. The disparity in graduation attainment levels has been widening between Muslims and other groups. The reasons behind their low literacy and low educational attainment in higher level are poverty, lack of awareness, lack of scholarships, lack of Islamic courses in government schools, lack of Muslim teachers in schools, misconception about girls' education and lack of employment opportunities for the educated Muslims. These facts are supported by the empirical data collected, which show that higher-level educational attainment is negligible and the unemployment rate is the highest among Muslims in comparison to national average and other socio-religious communities. It must also be brought to light that Muslims do not see education as necessarily translating into formal employment. Due to their low representation in government jobs, they have a feeling of alienation and discrimination

from the state. Thus, the low perceived returns from education do not help the cause of retention of Muslims in the education system.

However, Madrasas have been playing a crucial role in educating Muslim children. Madrasa is the main educational institution among Muslim communities, which has historical, religious, educational and economic importance in Nepal. Traditionally, the Madrasas were established to provide Islamic education as well as education about other necessary areas to the children and the community as a whole. However, the Madrasas of Nepal, these days, are providing both the Islamic and secular education that could meet the present-day needs.

The Muslim leaders, Maulvies and concerned communities have felt the need for both modern education as well as Islamic education. Hence, they have selectively and with known reservations introduced the modern formal educational contents into the Madrasa curriculum. The Madrasas have managed to obtain subject teachers for formal education, using their own resources, which are rather limited. The concerned people have understood the need to impart a modern education to Madrasa students and thus pave the way to achieving the goals of EFA.

The research data clearly show that a majority of Muslim workers are engaged in self-employment activities such as street vending, small trades and enterprises, construction and agricultural laborer, particularly in urban areas. The fragility of Muslim participation in the economy and the low level of assets accumulation in general further negatively affects the children's education.

Muslims have poor access to bank credit. The average size of credit is meager and low compared to other socio-religious groups. The percentage of households who access bank facilities is much lower in villages where the Muslim population is high, due to landlessness and the non-availability of such facilities. To qualify for a bank account, a land registration certificate is required or possession of fixed property as collateral, which is the main barrier for Muslims. This amounts to the financial exclusion of Muslims and has far-reaching consequences for the community, which is already economically vulnerable and educationally backward. For those primarily engaged in self-employed work, access to credit is crucial.

Muslims are poorly represented in government jobs and defense and security related activities. This is a matter of some concern because it is directly linked to the sense of well-being felt by the community. According to 2001 data, the share of Muslims in Gazette third class officers is only 0.5 percent, which is very low in comparison to their population in the country of Nepal. Representation of Muslims in the civil service and the army was nil in the study area. However, the situation is gradually changing after the restoration of democracy in Nepal.

The cross-cultural relationship is slowly relaxing, as the Muslims have now endorsed the idea of educating their children in multicultural institutions and their involvement in non-religious public domain. Nevertheless, they remain rigid and conservative, as much as Hindus, on some other aspects like cross-religious marriage. They have remained excluded in comparison to other caste/ethnic groups in Nepal due to Islamic law and customary governance of the Muslim community that discourage Muslims from getting involved in secular public institutions like mainstream schools, NGOs, and political organizations.

The Muslim tradition, in Nepal, is found to be discriminatory against girl education and exploitation against women with regards to mobility. There is a misconception regarding girl education and employment. They do not allow women access to any kinds of jobs outside the home, which is common among Nepali Muslims. Polygamy, *purdah* and religious prohibition against family planning are typical problems that Muslim women face. The Muslim women are far behind in education, social mobility and status in society as compared to Hindu women, which further excludes Muslim women since mobility gained through educational attainment and exposure to modernization has direct bearing on acquisition of political power.

Nepalese Muslims suffer from stigma and social exclusion due to their status in the society. Such groups experience cumulative disabilities. The Sachar Committee Report (2006) of India also shows the situation of marginalization and backwardness of Muslims and recommends that these groups be treated as the Most Backward Classes and several measures including reservation be made available to them. Muslims are among the most deprived of India's social groups. Marginalization, violence and

discrimination are implicated in producing and sustaining these low levels of attainment and in depressing Muslim aspirations and pushing down levels of achievement.

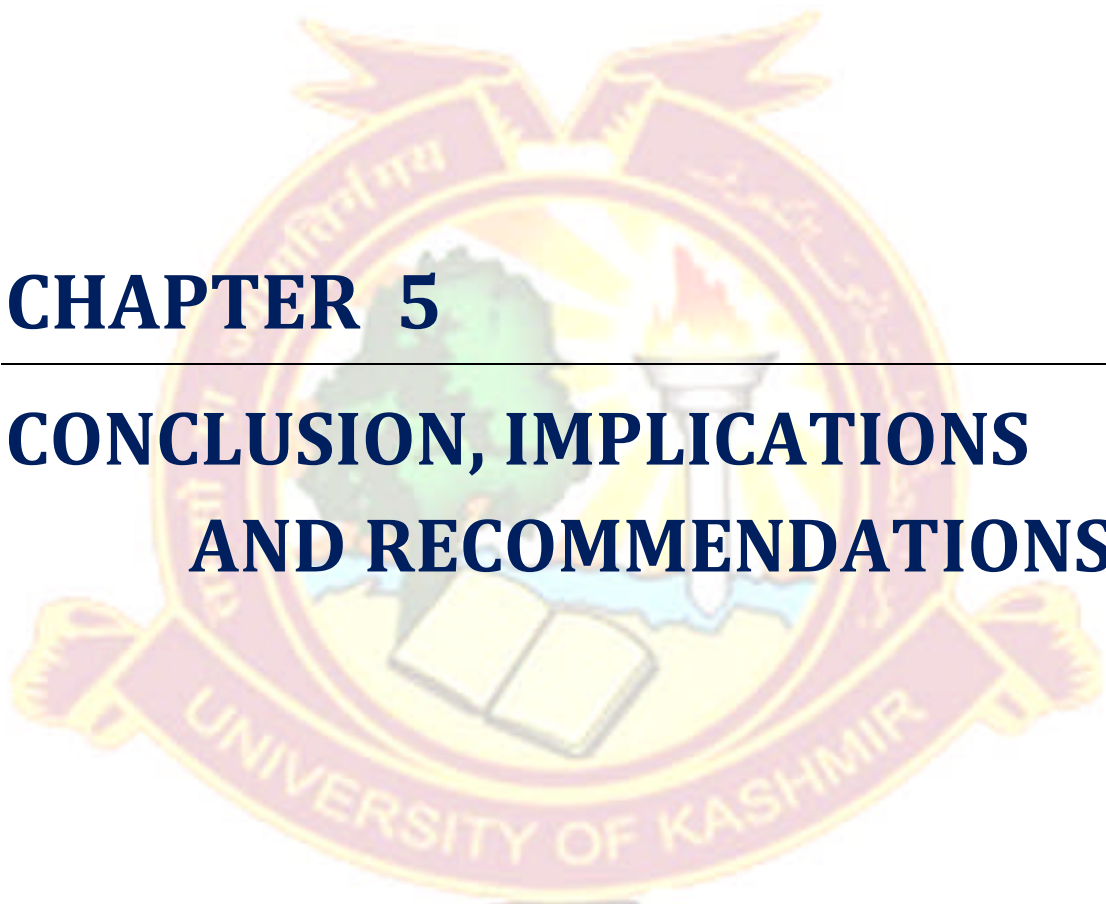
Muslims are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups in both Nepal and India. Exclusion of Muslims is clearly reflected in their low literacy, high poverty rate and low representation in the civil service, police, armies and other decision-making levels of the state. Muslims have been excluded from mainstream development processes. Therefore, the poverty among Muslims is much higher than the average national rate and their representation in political power spheres is much lower.

Muslims are one of the victim groups of regional discrimination against Madhesh. Since more than 95 per cent of Muslims live in Madhesh, the advancement of Madhesh in terms of social change, economic development, and the attainment of political power is a prerequisite for the inclusion of Muslims with respect to the total power structure of the country. However, Muslims are a minority not only in a national context but also among the inhabitants of Madhesh. The Madhesh movements, dominated by plains Hindu caste, have not properly addressed the aspirations of Muslims. Consequently, the Muslim struggle for their separate identity appeared very recently, as did access to natural resources of the country and representation in the political power structure.

## **CHAPTER 5**

---

# **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



**I**n this final chapter, building on the analysis and interpretations of the empirical evidence, conclusions are drawn on the basis of the research findings and the theories presented. The discussion is widened to encompass the overall policy and practice-related responses of the Nepalese school system to the needs of Muslims children in the schools of Nepal. The implications of the study and recommendations to educate Muslims for their social inclusion into society is also presented.

## **5.1 Conclusion**

Muslims are one of the highly disadvantaged, marginalized and excluded minority groups with a distinct religious and cultural identity in Nepal. They have been excluded in terms of social, economic, educational and political institutions, which, is clearly reflected in their low literacy and higher poverty rate and low representation in the civil service, police and military force as well as other decision-making levels of the state. Historically, they have long been ignored by the state and excluded from the mainstream development processes in the pretext of their origin, religious minority status and territorial or regional identity.

The nature of centralized state governance structures and other discriminatory practices in the country have contributed to the exclusion of these communities in the past. During the Ranaregime (1848-1951), only family members and loyal supporters were entitled to socio-economic opportunities and their power was further strengthened by social exclusion in Nepal. During this feudal regime, any dissent, in the form of alternative ‘institutions’ or ideologies, was brutally suppressed, and the privileges of the dominant group were further reinforced by the state.

After major political changes in 1951, there has been a centralization of power largely within three caste/ethnic groups (hill Brahmins, Chhetris and Newars) who constitute

only 35 percent of the population in Nepal. The Muslims, Madhesis, indigenous peoples and other socio-religious minority groups have largely been excluded from the decision and policy making levels in the government, and therefore, they have been deprived of the opportunity to articulate their needs and priorities through forming government policy in their favor. Thus, due to their exclusion from decision-making and policy making frameworks, they have remained poor, illiterate and exploited in Nepal. The adverse effects of unequal opportunities and a political power, on development, are even more damaging because the educational, economic, social and political disadvantages are reinforced repeatedly across generations.

The cultural differences of mountain, hill and Tarai, are also strong factors in identity formation, and create differences between the Tarai and Hill peoples of Nepal. The one religion, one language and one culture policy of the state in the past ignored cultural diversity, creating cultural exclusion through lack of national recognition of other languages and of symbols such as the dress and food of other ethnic and religious groups. This lack of recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity created a deep sense of disrespect and frustration among the Muslims, Madhesis and Janajatis, who felt undermined and humiliated. These cultural manifestations of differences have been present for generations. Cultural discrimination against certain groups served as a basis of solidarity to move against the state. Caste- and gender-based discriminations also contributed to the movement against the state in Nepal.

Nepal has been remained a Hindu state for the last 24 decades and has been ruled by the, so-called high caste, the Brahmins. The Caste system was a state protected ideology in Nepal, which played a key role in shaping the character of national society, where hill castes, through their cultural legacy, continue to dominate the political power structure of the modern Nepali state.

The caste system in Nepal was legally imposed with the implementation of the *Muluki Ain* in 1854, which brought all the indigenous nationalities, Muslims and other socio-religious groups into the caste hierarchy. Following the Ain, Muslims were placed into impure and untouchable groups, which restricted them their social mobility, social interactions and choice of occupation. As a result, they were rapidly excluded from the different spheres of society.



The system was so ingrained that its influence continues through informal mechanisms such as patriarchy, caste based laws, cultural domination and non-recognition even after the caste-based laws were formally abolished in the 1960's. It is still influencing the poverty of marginalized groups and undermining their ability to mobilize for their rights and compete with the dominant groups, demonstrating a circular causation even in present-day Nepal.

Nepal's caste-based social structure, social discrimination, social inequality, exclusionary practices in society, centralized government system, governments melting-pot policy, imposition of one language, one culture and one religion of Hinduism and a common national curriculum and monolingual education system, imbalance of regional development, non-recognition of Madrasa education and lack of inclusive and needs-based education policy and plans are the mainly responsible for the social exclusion of Muslims in the country.

Muslims in general have themselves to blame for their low literacy rate and the consequent exclusion from mainstream society. In the present context, Muslims cultural practices, traditions, religious orthodoxy and misconceptions towards mainstream education are also responsible for their social exclusion in Nepal.

Social exclusion of a particular group is a great threat to the nation-building processes of any state. This problem becomes more serious when a country is comprised of a variety of minority and majority ethnic groups. The socially excluded group slowly detaches itself from the mainstream and develops a prejudice towards the majority groups, finally turning it into a closed community that may lead it to self-social exclusion. This is one of the dominant reasons why the Nepalese Muslim community is characterized by a high level of poverty and a low level of education and health care. It is also the same cause why they have very low access to productive resources and national policy and governance structures.

Education is key for overall human and societal development, and is regarded as a fundamental human right throughout the world. The interim constitution of Nepal, under the fundamental rights, clearly states that every citizen shall have the right to receive free education from the State up to secondary level. However, the social

inclusion of minority groups is not possible without changing the educational situation of minority groups in the country.

In Nepal, the real progress of educational development begun only after the dawn of democracy in 1951. To address the minority issues, the government of Nepal took initiatives from the Tenth Plan (2002-2007) by incorporating social inclusion among the four pillars of the plan, which were further legitimized by the Interim Constitution, 2007.

The Three Year Interim Plan also provisioned to improve the livelihood of the Muslim community by increasing their access to social and economic resources and to all levels of the state structures on a proportional basis. This was to be carried out by avoiding the institutional, structural, and legal obstacles standing in the way of their inclusion into mainstream processes and the subsequent assertion of their social, cultural, economic and human development. However, no target policies and programs have been presently implemented to enhance the capability of Muslim education.

The government of Nepal has formed many educational commissions over the last six decades to uplift the education quality in the country. Most of the commission reports have recommend implementing a monolingual education system and a common national curriculum in the schools. However, for the first time the HLNEC (1998) has categorically recommended in vain different policies and strategies to educate the excluded groups in the country.

There are several commitments made by the government of Nepal at the national and international levels in recent years that deal with providing education at both primary and secondary levels. EFA and MDG have been major agenda items of educational plans in the country. Nepal has made some remarkable progress in this regard. Muslims have not been able to sufficiently reap the benefits of state intervention and growth in education. Despite overall improvement in educational status, the rate of progress has been the slowest for Muslim people. As a result, Muslims and many other minority groups are still lagging behind in the field of education

Muslims are virtually lagging behind all other communities and a trend of relative deterioration is observed in almost all spheres of day-to-day life. Especially in the field of education, the situation is of great concern. They are one of the least literate groups in Nepal, with a low Human Poverty Index. The Muslim literacy rate is only 34.7 percent at the national level and 39.9 percent in the study area, which is below the national average of 53.7 percent. So is the case with a poverty index value of merely 0.239 against the national poverty index of 0.325. Likewise, 41 percent of Muslims have been living below the poverty line against 31 percent of the national average, a figure exacerbated by 40.4 percent of Muslims being landless.

There is significant disparity between the educational status of Muslims and other hill Brahmins and castes/ethnic groups. Both the mean years of schooling and attendance levels of Muslims are markedly lower. There is a noticeable gap between male and female literacy rate among Muslims in the country. The Muslim female literacy rate is only 26.5 percent whereas the national average female literacy is 54.5 percent. Attendance of Muslim children at the primary and secondary levels is only 32.1 and 7.9 percent, respectively, which is the lowest percentage compared to the average national levels of 73.5 percent and 30.5 percent, respectively.

There is a huge disparity between Muslims and others socio-religious groups in higher education in Nepal. At the graduate and above graduate level, the attainment is only 2.1 percent, whereas for females it is one percent, which is far below the national average of 22.9 percent. One of the key reasons for the low participation of Muslims in higher education is their significantly low achievement level in SLC attainment rates. Muslims seem to have significant disadvantages in school completion rates. Once this hurdle is crossed and persons from the community become eligible for higher education, the lack of job opportunities in the country presents another obstacle.

From the gender perspective, higher-level education attainment situation of Muslim women is very low in comparison to their male counterparts and other community groups. The main reasons of low literacy, high dropout rate and low attainment of higher education among Muslims and particularly girls are the prevalence of poverty, religious orthodoxy, early marriage, lack of awareness, and lack of Islamic education

and Muslim-friendly environment in government schools. Likewise, the lack of mother tongue education, lack of Muslim female teachers, lack of incentives and scholarships, a sense of discrimination and humiliation, presence of agencies advocating Madrasa education, lack of employment opportunities and the customary law of Muslim society are the other reasons impacting the Muslim community in Nepal.

Madrasas in Muslim communities have played a crucial role in educating Muslim children. The majority of Muslims prefer to send their children especially girls to Madrasa than government schools because of poverty, lack of Islamic education, lack of Muslim-friendly environment and lack of Urdu language teaching in government schools.

The Muslims in Nepal feel that the school environment is not compatible with their culture. There is a lack of an Islamic environment and an absence of the Islamic code of conduct in mainstream schools. They opine that prayer in school, school uniform, dancing and signing of girls and coeducation is not compatible with their cultural beliefs. The lack of consideration for their cultural practices in schools such as Namaz (prayer) and Roza (fasting) are other hindrances, which have been affecting child education among the Muslim community.

Research results showed that there is agreement that some agents and agencies such as Madrasas, religious leaders and Maulvies indirectly plead against mainstream education by advocating Madrasa education. Feelings of discrimination and humiliation in schools are also active causes to hinder Muslim children access to mainstream education. Poverty is an overarching cause of their lower access to education as well. Other factors are lower literacy rate of the parents, engagement in household and income-generating activities, traditional thinking of parents towards education, lack of optimism towards succeeding in school, need for a job related to immediate gratification and lack of separate girls' schools.

Muslims suggested some measures to increase enrollment of Muslims in mainstream schools. They viewed that the curriculum should be developed to cater their religious needs. The curriculum should provide an integrated approach to both school and religious education. They also suggested that the medium of instruction should be Urdu

especially in schools where Muslim children are the majority. There are also requests for the immediate translation of textbooks prescribed by the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) into Urdu language for the schools and registered Madrasas.

Certain demands for registered Madrasas have been put forward such as financial support similar to other community schools, special incentive for girls, scholarships for higher education, free textbooks and a day meal program.

In Nepal, the Muslim tradition is discriminatory against girls' education and it is exploitative against women with regards to their mobility outside the home. They have certain misconceptions and stereotypes with respect to girls' education and employment. The majority of Muslims feel that education is not important for girls and that it may instill a wrong set of values in a girl or woman. They do not allow women to hold any kind of job outside of the home, which, is common among Nepali Muslims. Polygamy, *purdah* and religious prohibition against family planning are also typical problems that the Muslim women have been facing. Muslim women are far behind in education, social mobilization and social status as compared to Hindu women. Mobility through educational attainment and exposure to modernization has a direct bearing on acquisition of political power.

The small number of girls that are enrolled in some educational institutes are forced to drop out of school because of the tradition of early marriage. Due to this tradition, the primary school dropout rate is very high among Muslim girls. Our interactions indicate that the problem may lie in non-availability of schools within easy reach for girls at lower levels of education, an absence of girls' hostels, absence of female teachers and availability of scholarships as they move up the education ladder.

Muslim women are far behind in education, social mobility and status in the society. There are many social taboos in Muslim society. Prohibition for family planning further contributes to the poverty and health of Muslim women. Prohibition for social mobility for Muslim women leads to confining themselves in household jobs. Muslim women from rich families are more restricted by *burka* and have less mobility outside the household whereas those belonging to poorer families in rural area could not afford to obey this custom because poverty demands them to work outside, particularly in

farming. Because of *purdah* system, Muslim women's representation and participation in the public domain is negligible in comparison to women of other communities.

Access to education is critical in order to benefit from emerging opportunities that accompany economic growth. The research data show the educational deprivation experienced by the Muslim community due mainly to the economic conditions. With low levels of enrollment leading to a sharp decline in attendance at higher levels of education, the situation of Nepalese Muslims is indeed very depressing as compared to most of the other castes and indigenous groups. In addition, the problem is more acute for girls and women. Reasons for this are varied, ranging from poverty to perceived discrimination resulting in an alienating school environment. While the overall situation remains unsatisfactory, the enrollment rates of female Muslims have been increasing gradually in recent years due to government policy on Madrasa registration with the district education office.

According to Amartya Sen's capability approach, economic and educational deprivation is prevalent among Muslim communities, which restricts from entering government jobs, economic activities and decision-making institutions of the state. The low literacy, high poverty and low social status of Muslims means that they face higher barriers in accessing services, taking advantage of economic opportunities and participating fully as responsible citizens of a democratic state.

The schemes and scholarships to encourage children from the community to pursue higher studies are inadequate. The government schools in some areas are poor or non-functioning. Some of them seem to be insensitive to the socio-cultural needs of the Muslim students and thus discourage them from attending school. Even in some areas where Urdu and Awadhi are the mother tongues of Muslims, the schools do not provide education in their mother tongue. Urdu is the mode of education in Madrasas throughout the country and it is a *lingua franca* among the Muslims residing in different linguistic zones. The mother tongue is both a human capital and an ethnic attributes. Education in the mother tongue enhances children's human capabilities and their choices and freedom, rather than curtailing. That's why it should be one of the central tasks of the schools (Mohanti & Mishra, 2000).

The Interim Constitution of Nepal ensures that each community has the right to basic education in their mother tongue. Despite the constitutional provision, the actors in the school system have misconceptions and reservations about mother tongue education. The schools, so far, have not received clear guidelines from the center about whether the school should begin teaching in mother tongue. The indifferent attitude of the center about launching and developing curriculum and textbooks for Muslims, which they claim due to lack of budgets and guidelines, is another factor hindering the education upliftment of the Muslim community. However, the mother tongue implementation guideline, approved by the government in 2010, could hopefully be an effective instrument in shaping the long-desired idea.

Muslims are very poorly represented in government jobs, defense and security-related activities. This is a matter of concern because it is directly linked to the sense of well-being felt by the community. According a data revealed in 2001, the share of Muslims in Gazette third class officers is only 0.5 percent, which is very low as compared to their population in the country. This researcher could not find any of the Muslims involved in the civil service or army force from the study area.

In the study area, the majority of Muslims have no agricultural land (69 percent) and 12 percent have less than one bigha of land, which is not sufficient for a sustainable livelihood. The majority of Muslim are engaged in self-employment activities, mainly, street vending, small trades and enterprises, construction and agricultural labor, and cross-border business with India. The fragility of Muslim participation in the economy and the low level of assets accumulation in general further impacts negatively on child education.

Muslims have poor access to bank credit. The percentage of households availing bank facilities is much lower in villages where the Muslim population is high, due mainly to the landlessness and the lack of availability of such facilities. To obtain a loan from the bank or other financial institutions, members of the Muslim community must own land or other property, which can serve as collateral. This amounts to the financial exclusion of Muslims and has far-reaching consequences for a community, which is already economically vulnerable and educationally backward.

However, the situation is gradually changing after the restoration of democracy in Nepal. The cross-cultural relationship is slowly relaxing, as the Muslims have now endorsed the idea of educating their children in multicultural institutions and their involvement in non-religious public domains. Nevertheless, they remain rigid and conservative, as much as Hindus, on some other aspects like cross-religious marriage. They have remained excluded in comparison to other caste/ethnic groups in Nepal and both the state and Islamic law are equally responsible for it. The customary governance of the Muslim community, which discourages them from getting involved in secular public institutions like mainstream schools, NGOs, and political organizations are added factors for their poor educational status.

In India, Muslims suffer from deprivation on almost every front. All the data show that Muslims face high levels of poverty and deprivation. They suffered from stigma and social exclusion due to their status in society. Such groups experience cumulative disabilities. The Sachar Committee Report (2006) of India also shows the Muslim situation of marginalization and backwardness and recommends that these groups be treated as Most Backward Classes and several measures including reservation be made available to them. Muslims are among the most deprived of India's social groups. Marginalization, violence and discrimination are implicated in producing and sustaining these low levels of attainment, in depressing Muslim aspirations and pushing down levels of achievement.

From this study, it is found that the social, economic, educational and political situation of Indian Muslims is somehow better than Nepalese Muslims but in the Indian context, they are generally backward and live in the shadow of vulnerability and poverty. The economic and political marginalization of Muslims is compounded by evidence of poor and discriminatory provisioning by the state.

Results from this empirical research suggests that Muslims are amongst the most marginalized communities in both Nepal and India in terms of social, economic and educational indices and in terms of political empowerment. It also clearly shows the backwardness of Muslims is due to their customary governance and weak financial conditions. There has been a serious lack of attention paid to the condition of the



Muslim community by various actors, specifically by the State, over the last six decades. The socio-economic backwardness, educational deprivation, political marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from the mainstream development processes seems to be structural and linked to policy decisions, failed implementation, and the general apathy of a large section of society, namely politicians, bureaucrats, and civil society.

All the above information related to education, economic and political exclusion of Muslims suggests that Muslims of Nepal are a distinct excluded group. The causes of the lower preference of Muslims in mainstream education is their religious construct, minority status and structure of their beliefs, and attitudes towards schooling, especially mainstream schools.

Today, bringing Muslims into the mainstream development process is the most urgent need of the country. This can be achieved only by increasing their access to education, which ultimately increases their access to job opportunities, political leadership and different walks of social aspects.

Exclusion of Muslims is structural and collective in nature. Therefore, without removing structural or institutional barriers, the inclusion of Muslims and other minority groups is not possible. Therefore, it is hard to improve their life conditions, preserve their languages and cultures and to ensure their inclusion in all aspects of national life unless the state initiates focused development interventions for these groups. Inclusive economic growth and equitable and inclusive development that address the issues of exclusion, discrimination, deprivation and disparities on the basis of caste, ethnicity, culture, language, religion, disability, geographical remoteness or territorial origin and gender is important to achieve the national and international goals of EFA and MDGs.

## **5.2 Implications**

The social inclusion agenda has been strongly put forward after the popular people's movement of 2006, especially in terms of building a just, prosperous and equitable society and eliminating the caste-wise, class-wise, regional, religious, culture and

gender-based disparities long-rooted in Nepal. These points are further legitimized and provisioned in the Interim Constitution of 2007. Thus, the social inclusion agenda is an important vehicle for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and exclusion based on caste, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, geographical/territorial origin and gender and to create a just society with rightful sharing of power and resources along with the active participation of the excluded groups. This is equally relevant to improving the human development performance of the excluded groups by improving their access to productive resources and social services.

Social inclusion and exclusion gained prominence in public and development policy discourse after it was included as one of the four pillars of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), otherwise also known as Nepal's Tenth Plan. The tenth plan defined social exclusion as a structural/institutional problem that needs to be reformed at the structural level in order to eliminate all forms of social inequality and discrimination in society.

Because of this policy, the issues of rights of minorities, Dalits, indigenous peoples, Madhesis, Muslims and women have been on the rise after the restoration of democracy in the country. The issues of federalism, state restructuring, proportional representation, equity and inclusion on the other hand have been broadened in light of the Interim Constitution of Nepal in 2007, which declared Nepal a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and secular federal democratic country.

In present-day Nepal, the minorities, Dalits, indigenous peoples, Muslims and Madhesis have comparatively fallen behind the other castes of the country with respect to education, social, economic and political indexes. Their presence at the state policy making level is remarkably low. As a key player in development, the state is held most responsible for sidelining these people from the mainstream social identity. Some of the groups of peoples in the country have been intentionally discriminated against and cornered by the state in the course of the nation-building processes in the country. The entire political history of the country prior to the establishment of democracy had hardly attempted to ensure the rights of Nepalese minorities. As a result, the majority of Nepalese minority communities, including Muslims, were deprived of access to the

mainstreams of the state resulting in the lack of participation in education, administration, army and police force, employment and political representation.

Presently, the minority Muslim communities living in the districts of Terai have been demanding proportional representation in the decision-making level of the state, equal access to education, provision of scholarships, reservation in employment and recognition of their Madrasas and Madrasa education equal to the government school and education in Nepal.

The various governments following the establishment of democracy have attempted to ensure their rights but these attempts have been fruitless for want of proper administrative back up and policies. Even the available policies and acts have been ineffective due to lack of strong implementation. However, minority issues and inclusion policies regarding marginalized groups have remained as an immediate concern of even the immature federalism and unformed constitution of the country have played role in implementing the rights of the minority Muslims in the country.

### **5.2.1 Policy Implication**

The Interim constitution of Nepal in 2007 has clearly declared Nepal a federal state. Since then the country is impatiently waiting to welcome the declaration of the new constitution. The government of Nepal, in order to meet the aim and objectives of the slogan “Education for All, 2015”, must provide a sizeable investment of time and resources.

Similarly, Under the School Sector Reform Plan, 2009, the government has brought forth various reform programs. In accordance with the Interim Constitution, 2007, the government has brought out MLE Guideline, 2010 in order to ensure the promotion of one’s culture and traditions providing primary level education in one’s own mother language.

With this as a background, this study could be helpful in improving access of the Muslim minorities to socio-economic, education, health facilities and politics. Since this research project has broadly studied the Madrasa, Madrasa education and Muslim minorities' in all aspects, the research could be a milestone in making plans and policies for the Muslim community's access to quality, practical and profession-oriented

education. Likewise, the study could be equally helpful in meeting the EFA and SSRP goal of the government of Nepal. The study could also be helpful in ensuring the rights of Muslims since the country is all set to implement federalism in the country.

Madrassa, so far, has been playing an important role in providing education to Muslim communities. Its role in educating female populations in the Muslim community is again a special one. Since 2009, the government of Nepal has made a provision to register Madrasa as a community school with the Department of Education. The government also has introduced a policy under which early education from Madrasa could be recognized as the equivalent of the government primary level of education. Currently, a few of the Madrasas registered with the Department of Education, have started teaching mainstream subjects. However, the government's policy has been mostly limited to letters only since it has not been able to deploy teachers and provide salaries to the work force involved in Madrasa teaching. Muslims in the country have been demanding appropriate grants for Madrasas, teachers of government-approved subjects, the establishment of separate schools for the girls, provision of employment for educated Muslims and provision of Scholarships for higher education. The government has not until now initiated any clear-cut and effective policy and programs that could fulfill the demands of the minority Muslims. This research could be a helping hand in bringing suitable policies and plans to the government of Nepal.

### **5.2.2 Implication for Future Research**

This research is mainly based on the Muslims of Banke district, which is known for Nepalgunj, a main city in the western part of the country. The study focused on the entire social, economic, political and educational plight of the Muslim community. Many of the deprivations exploitations and alienations faced by the community are addressed. While carrying out the study, remarkable differences were recorded in the socio-economic indexes among the Muslims living in Jaispur VDC, a Muslim populated area bordering the neighboring India, Kingariya, a highly marginalized, educationally and economically poorest community, residing in a village of the Puraini VDC of Bank district and the Muslims residing in the Nepalgunj Municipality.

While the Muslim community in Kingariya and Jaispur sent their children to Madrasa under the religious influence, the Muslim community in Nepalgunj preferred to send

their children to private and government schools in hope that they find careers in modern jobs and employment sectors. During the course of the study, the Madrasa in the cities were found to provide education even to the Hindu children. Their accessibility to both Muslim and Hindu children emphasize the processes of urbanization, westernization and industrialization, which bring about the changes in ones religious and cultural attitudes and identity. However, the study has not focused very strongly on the changes in religious and cultural attitudes of the people involved, brought about by the urbanization and industrialization. Nevertheless, this study could serve as a guideline to future researchers who are willing to delve deeper into such issues.

### **5.2.3 Implication for Muslim Community**

It is believed that this study is helpful to both the Muslim and non-Muslim population, besides researchers and policy makers. The Muslim communities of these research areas have been made more aware of their social, economic, educational and political conditions and thus are better able to understand the issues involved.

This study is thus an important document for the marginalized and excluded groups since they can put forward their rights-related demands and initiate a dialogue about their condition with the policy makers based on the conclusions and findings here. Likewise, the Muslims falling outside the research area can use this research as a tool to advocate their grievances and lack of access to various facilities.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made:

- The main reason behind the lower participation of Muslims in mainstream education, which ultimately results in their social exclusion in terms of economic, political and socio-cultural alienation, relates to their cultural and religious needs. Islamic education should be incorporated into school programs either as a compulsory or elective course to increase access of Muslim children to mainstream education.
- The government of Nepal needs to develop a clear-cut policy and implementation mechanisms for inclusive and integrated education to achieve

the goals of EFA and MDGs and enhance the capability of Muslims to attain a higher quality of life.

- Muslim community leaders, Maulvies and organizations have, of course, a crucial role to play in promoting the educational and economic development of the community. A literacy campaign and advocacy program should be launched in the densely Muslim populated districts in order to make them aware of the importance of a modern education for better livelihood. The active involvement of Muslim intellectuals as facilitators of the program should also be made possible.
- Reservation in higher education levels and government employment should be provided to the Muslims to accelerate their social inclusion. The state should also work out mechanisms for ensuring adequate representation, whether through reservations or otherwise, for Muslims in particular and other marginalized groups in general in government services, foreign employment, politics, and other decision-making bodies of the state.
- The program of free registration of Madrasas as community schools should be continued. An integrated curriculum needs to be developed through the incorporation of mainstream subjects along with Islamic courses in order to ensure the quality of education in these institutions.
- Madrasas should be registered based on proper mapping of community requirements and their capability to run mainstream courses. Furthermore, the government also needs to launch a specific program to develop proper physical infrastructure for these Madrasas.
- A central-level Madrasa board needs to be established for facilitating policies and plans at different levels to guide the operation of Madrasas and establish a uniform system of management across the country.
- The curriculum of Madrasas should include mainstream subjects such as Nepali, English, Mathematics, and Science along with the Islamic courses.
- There should be two types of curriculum frameworks for mainstream schools and Madrasas incorporating mainstream subjects. For mainstream schools, the

provision of 20percent elective subjects should be introduced to facilitate the education of religious and Islamic subjects along with Urdu. However, for the Madrasas, besides Nepali, English, Mathematics and Science subjects, the present curriculum of social studies, environmental education, moral education and health needs to be revised to incorporate Islamic values.

- The curriculum of social studies should be redeveloped to make it Muslim-culture friendly. This curriculum should be aligned with a curriculum of multiculturalism incorporating values of different cultural groups. It should aim for homogeneity or a common national culture in heterogeneity and not promote strictly societal heterogeneity.
- The right to learn in the mother tongue of a child should be implemented effectively as a key element for the promotion of personal development, cultural identity and heritage. There should be a regular provision for switching between the national and international language. The production and distribution of teaching materials and learning resources and any other reading materials in mother tongues should be developed and promoted.
- Madrasas are the educational institution of Muslim communities and therefore should be provided with proper assistance similar to any other community schools.
- Muslims generally hesitate to send their girl students to co-ed schools, therefore, separate girls' schools should be established.
- In areas where a large number of Muslims reside, the school environment should be made friendlier to the Islamic culture including toilet facilities, school prayer hours, and dress code. The cultural needs of Muslims should be taken into consideration while fixing the timetable for various school activities.
- Arrangements should be made to hold the examination of Islamic courses in conjunction with mainstream courses. Otherwise, the Madras organizers may feel neglected or alienated.
- Provision for training and licensing of Madrasa teachers should be developed. Since Madrasas are attracting more Muslim girl students, proper incentives

should be provided for the girls to use them as a change agent for educating Muslims.

- The state should allocate a budget and resources for Muslims and Muslim-dominated localities on a scale proportionate to their population. Given the fact that Muslims are among the most marginalized communities living in the country, it is advisable that this allocation could be even higher than what is merited by their numerical proportion. There should be proper mechanisms in place to ensure that this allocation is suitably made and implemented and in this there should be proper representation and participation of Muslims as well
- Development schemes must also be culturally sensitive so that they are acceptable to the Muslim community. In planning and implementing development schemes the participation of the local community, including Muslims must be ensured.
- Further, in-depth empirical research, needs to be conducted to collect information on social, economic, educational and political conditions of Muslims and make these available to the public and to activists, organizations and policy-makers. Such information would need to be quantitative, qualitative as well as comparative, so that conditions between Muslims and other communities can be compared and policies suitably adjusted to ensure equity. This information needs also to be disaggregated in terms of gender, region, class, caste, and linguistic groups to avoid the pitfalls of treating all Muslims as a monolith.



The logo of the University of Kashmir is a circular emblem. It features a central sunburst with rays emanating from a central point. To the left of the sunburst is a green tree, and to the right is a white torch. Below the sunburst is an open book. The emblem is surrounded by a purple border with gold outlines. The text "UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR" is written in gold capital letters along the bottom arc of the border. The top arc contains text in Urdu and Kashmiri script. A purple ribbon with gold outlines is draped across the top of the emblem.

# **REFERENCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Ahier, J., Cosin, B., & Hales, M. (Eds.). (1996). *Diversity and change: Education policy and selection*. London: Routledge, in association with the Open University.
- Aryal, I. R., & Dhungyal, T. P. (1975). *A new history of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Voice of Nepal.
- Aryal, K. R. (1970). *Education for the development of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Shanti Prakashan.
- Atkinson, A. B. (1998). Social exclusion, poverty and unemployment. *Case paper, 4*, 1-20.
- Ballantine, J. H. (1983). *Sociology of education: A systematic analysis*. USA: Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall Inc.
- Banks, J. A. (1997). *Educating citizens in a Multicultural society*. New York: Teacher College Press.
- Banks, J. A. (1981). *Multiethnic education: Theory and practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Banks, J. A. (1997). Multicultural education: Characteristics and goals. In Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Baogang, H., & Kymlicka, W. (2005). *Multiculturalism in Asia*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Beall, J., & Piron, L.H. (2005). *DFID Social exclusion review*. London: The London School of Economic and Political Science.
- Bennett, C.I. (1990). *Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Bennett, T., & Silva, E.B. (2006). Cultural capital and inequality: Policy issues and contexts. *Cultural Trends*, 15 (2/3), 87-106.
- Bessant, J., & Watts, R. (2002). *Sociology Australia* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Bhattachan, K. B . (2000). Possible ethnic revolution or insurgency in predatory unitary Hindu state, Nepal. In Kumar, D. (Ed.), *Domestic conflict and crises of governability in Nepal*. Kathmandu: CNAS.
- Bhattachan, K. B., Sunar, T. B., & Bhattachan, Y. K. (2007). *Caste based discrimination in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization and Dalit NGO Federation.

- Bhattacharya, R. K. (1973). The concept and ideology of caste among the Muslims of rural West Bengal. In Ahamad, I. (Ed.), *Caste and social stratification among the Muslims in India*. Delhi: Manohar Book Service.
- Bista, D. B. (1967). *Fatalism and development: Nepal's struggle for modernization*. Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan.
- Bista, D.B. (1976). *Peoples of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Bourdieu, P. (1973). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In R. B. (Ed.), *Knowledge, education and cultural change*. London: Tavistock Publication.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture*. London: Sage Publication.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. (1990). *Reproduction in education: Society and culture* (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publication.
- Burchardt, T. (2000). Social exclusion. In Davis, M (Ed.), *Blackwell encyclopedia of social work*. Blackwell.
- Burchardt, T., Le Grand, J., & Piachaud, D. (2002). Introduction. In Hills, J., Le Grand, J., & Piachaud, J. (Eds.). *Understanding social exclusion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cameron, C. (2006). Geographies of welfare and exclusion: Social inclusion and exception. *Progress in Human Geography*, 30 (3), 396–397.
- CBS. (2003). *A population monograph of Nepal*, vol. I. Kathmandu: Author.
- CBS. (2003). *Reports of population census, 2001*. Kathmandu: Author.
- CBS. (2004). *Population census of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Author.
- CBS. (1952/54). *Nepal- National population census*. Kathmandu: Author
- CBS. (1995). *Population monograph of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Author.
- CEDAW. (1979). *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women*. New York: United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- CERID. (2010). *Education management information system report on higher education (2007-08)*. Kathmandu: The University Grants Commission, Nepal.
- CIA World Fact book. (2011). *Population below poverty line by country*. Retrieved from [http://www.NationMaster.com/graph/eco\\_pop\\_bel\\_pov\\_lin-economy-population-below-poverty-line](http://www.NationMaster.com/graph/eco_pop_bel_pov_lin-economy-population-below-poverty-line).

- CNAS. (2009). Social exclusion and group mobilization: A case study of Yadavs and Tarai Dalits in Dhanusa district. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 36 (Special Issue), ix.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2003). *Research methods in education* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). London: Routledge Falmer Taylor & Francis Group.
- CRC. (1989). U.N. *General Assembly*. Retrieved from <http://www.cirp.org>.
- Dahal, D.R. (2009). Social exclusion and group mobilization: A case study of Yadavs and Tarai Dalits in Dhanusa district. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 36 (Special Issue), 132-151.
- Dastider, M. (1995). *Religious minorities in Nepal : An analysis of the state of the Buddhists and Muslims in the Himalayan Kingdom*. New Delhi: Vedams eBooks.
- Dastider, M. (2007). *Understanding Nepal: Muslims in a plural society*. New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications.
- de Hann, A. (1998). Social exclusion an alternative concept for the study of deprivation. *IDS Bulletin*, 29 (1), 10-19.
- de Haan, A. (1999). Social exclusion: An alternative concept for the study of deprivation? *IDS Bulletin*, 29 (1).
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage Publication.
- DFID/World Bank. (2006). *Unequal Citizens. Gender, caste and ethnic exclusion in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Author.
- DFID. (2005). *Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion: A DFID policy paper*. Kathmandu: Department for International Development.
- DOE. (2007). *Flash I report*. Bhaktapur: Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education and Sports, Department of Education.
- Duffy, K. (1995). *Social exclusion and human dignity in Europe*. Council of Europe.
- Election Commission. (2007). *Sambidhan Sabha Nirvachan: Nirvachan Parinam Pustika (in Nepali)* (Election of Constituent assembly: Booklet of election). Kathmandu: Author.
- Eller, J. D. (1997). Anti-anti-multiculturalism. *American Anthropologist*, 99 (2), 249–256.

- 
- Escobar, A. (1997). Cultural politics and biological diversity: State, capital and social movements in the Pacific Coast of Colombia. In Orin S., & Richard, F. (Eds.). *Culture and social protest: Between resistance and revolution*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Eshleman, J.R., & Cashion, B.G. (1985). *Sociology: An introduction* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Little Brown and Company.
- Evans, M.P., & Prellis, J. (1995). *Channel vision: Poverty, social exclusion and debate on social welfare in France and Britain*. LSE STICERD Discussion Paper 115, Oct.
- Figuerola, A., Teofilo, A., & Denis, S. (1995). Social exclusion and social inequality in Peru. In Rodgers, G., Charles, G., & Jose, B. F (Eds.). *Social exclusion rhetoric and reality response*. Geneva: International School of Labor Studies.
- Francis, P. (1997). Social capital, civil society and social exclusion. In Kothari, U., & Matin, M (Eds.). *Development theory and practice: Critical perspectives*. Hampshire: Palgrave.
- Furze, B., & Healy, P. (1997). Understanding society and change. In Stafford, C., & Furze, B (Eds.). *Society and Change* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Australia: Macmillan Education Melbourne.
- Gaborieau, M. (1972). Muslims in the Hindu Kingdom of Nepal. India: *Contribution to Indian Sociology- New Series*, VI, 84-105.
- Gaige, F.H. (1975). *Regionalism and national unity in Nepal*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Gautam, R. (1987). *The policy of Nepal towards the freedom fighters of the 1857 freedom Struggle*. Kathmandu: Himalayan Culture.
- Giddens, A. (1997). *The constitution of society*. UK: Polity Press.
- GOI. (2006). *Social, economic and educational status of Muslim community of India- A report*. New Delhi: Prime Minister's High Level Committee, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India.
- GON. (1962). *Constitution of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Author.
- GON. (1990). *Constitution of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Author.
- GON. (2007). *Interim constitution of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Author.
- GON. (2007). *Nepal three year Interim plan (2007- 2010)*. Kathmandu: Author.
-

- GON. (2010). *Three Year Interim Plan of Nepal (2010-2013)*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Gore, C. (1995). Markets, citizenship and social exclusion. In Rodgers, G., Gore, C., & Figueiredo, J. 1995. (Eds.). *Social exclusion, rhetoric, reality, responses*. Geneva: A contribution to the World Summit for Social Development, International Institute for Labor Studies, International Labor Organization.
- Grin, F. (1990). The Economic approach to minority languages. *Journal of multilingual and multicultural development*, 11 (1), 153.
- Gurung, H. (2005). *Social exclusion and Maoist insurgency*. Unpublished paper presented at the National Dialogue on the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal People. Kathmandu. 19-20 January.
- Gurung, H. (2006). *Nepal atlas and statistics*. Kathmandu: Himal Books.
- Gurung, H. (2007). *From exclusion to inclusion, socio-political agenda for Nepal*. Kathmandu: SIRD, SNV Nepal.
- Hachhethu, K. (2009). Social exclusion and Nepali Muslim: A case study of Banke district. *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 36 (Special Issue), 84-127.
- Hangmen, S. (2010). *The rise of ethnic politics in Nepal: Democracy in the margins*. London: Routledge.
- Harker, R. (1984). On reproduction, habitus and education. *British Journal of Sociology of education*, 5.
- Harker, R. (1990). Bourdieu: education and reproduction. In Harker, R., Mahar, C., & Wilkes, C. (Eds.), *An introduction to the work of Pierre Bourdieu: The practice of theory*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Harper, G. (1997). Society, culture, socialization and the individual. In Stafford, C., & Furze, B. (Eds.). *Society and change* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Melbourne: Macmillan Education Australia.
- Hanson, D. R. (1966). *Education and the development nation*. London: Holt Rinehart.
- Helen, I. S. (1971). Education, modernization, and national integration. In Murray, W. (Ed.), *Basic books: Anthropological perspectives on education*.
- Hess, B.B., Markson, E.W., & Stein, P.J. (1988). *Sociology*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.
- HLNEC. (1998). *High-level national education report 1998*. Kathmandu: High-level HMG/Ministry of Education.
- HMG/N. (1997). *Secondary education perspective plan*. Kathmandu: MOES.

- 
- Hofer, A. (1979). The caste hierarchy and the state in Nepal: A study of the Muluki Ain of 1854, Innsbruck, 157-65.
- Hofer, A. (2004). *The caste hierarchy and the state in Nepal: A study of the Muluki Ain of 1854*. Lalitpur: Himal Books.
- Hopper, E., & Osborn, M. (1975). *Adult students: education selection and social control*. London: Frances Pinter Publishers Ltd.
- <http://www.election.gov.np>
- Jackson, C. (1999). Social exclusion and gender: Does one size fit all?. *The European Journal of Development Research* 11 (1), 130.
- Kabeer, N. (2000). *Social exclusion, poverty and discrimination: towards an analytical framework*, 31 (4). 83-97. doi: 10.1111/j. 1759-5436.2000. mp31004009.x.
- Kabeer, N. (2005). The search for inclusive citizenship: Meaning and expressions in an interconnected world. In Kabeer, N. (Ed.). *Inclusive citizenship: Meaning and expressions*, (pp. 1-37). London and New York: Zed Books.
- Khalidi, O. (2006). Muslims in Indian economy. *Three essays collective*, 1,78.
- Klasen, S. (1998). *Social exclusion and children in OECD countries: Some conceptual issues*. Paris: OECD.
- Kristensen, H. (1995). Social exclusion and spatial stress: The connections. In Room, G. (Ed.). *Beyond the threshold. The measurement and analysis of social exclusion*. Bristol: Polity Press.
- Kumar, D. (2009). Encountering marginality: Social exclusion of hill Dalits in Surkhet district. *Contribution to Nepalese studies: Social exclusion and group mobilization in Nepal*, 36 (special issue), 200.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to quality research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Kymlicka, W. (2005). Liberal multiculturalism: Western model, global trends and Asian debates. In Kymlicka, W., & Baogang, H. (Eds.). *Multiculturalism in Asia*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Lawoti, M. (2005). *Towards a Democratic Nepal: Inclusive political institutions in a multicultural society*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Lawoti, M. (2010). *Spheres of exclusion in new democracies: Nepal in the nineties*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Levitas, R. (1998). *The inclusive society? Social exclusion and the new labor*. London:
-

- Macmillan.
- Manandhar, P. N. (1988). Research note, ethnobotanical census on herbal medicine of Banke district, Nepal. *Contributions to Nepalese studies*, 25 (1), 57.
- Mann, E. A. (1992). *Boundaries and identities: Muslims, work and status in Aligarh*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Maqbool, S. (1969). Muslims representation in U.P. Services since independence. *Radiance*, 5-6.
- Meighan, R., & Siraj-Blatchford, I. (1997). *A sociology of educating* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: Cassell.
- Merton, R. K., & Nisbet, R. A. (1966). *Contemporary social problems* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). USA: Hardcourt, Brace & World Inc.
- Misra, B.B. (1961). *The Indian middle classes*. London: Oxford University Press.
- MOEC. (1991). *Basic and primary education project: A master plan*. Kathmandu: Ministry of Education and culture.
- MOES. (2003). *Education for all 2004-2009: Core document*. Kathmandu: Author.
- MOES. (2003). *Education for all: Nepal plan of action Nepal (2001-2015)*. Kathmandu: Author.
- MOES. (2004). *Analytical description of educational indicators of Nepal (1997-2000)*. Kathmandu: Author.
- MOES. (2005). *EFA theme wise strategies and action plan*. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education and Sports, Keshar Mahal.
- Mohanti, A.K., & Mishra, G. (Eds.). (2000). *Psychology of poverty and disadvantage*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- Morrison, K. R. B. (1993). *Planning and accomplishing school-centered evaluation*. Dereham: Norfolk Peter Francis Publishers.
- Munro, A. (1997). *Gender and race in the construction and reconstruction of work: Catering and cleaning*. Unpublished paper presented to the 15th International Labor Process Conference 25-27th March, University of Edinburgh.
- Nasr, S. H. (1994a). *Islam and the plight of modern man*. Lahore: Suhail Academy.
- Nasr, S. H. (1994b). *Ideals and realities of Islam*. Lahore: Suhail Aedamy.
- NCAER. (2004/5). National council of applied economic research. *Annual report*: Author



- NEC. (1992). *National education commission report*. Kathmandu: Author.
- NESAC. (1998). *Nepal human development report*. Kathmandu: Nepal South Asia Centre.
- NESP. (1971). *National education system plan (1971- 1976)*. Kathmandu: Ministry of Education, Keshar Mahal.
- Neuman, W. L. (1997). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- NMIS. (1996). *Social, economic, religious, cultural, and educational situation of Nepali Muslim community*. Kathmandu: Author.
- NNEPC. (1956). *Education in Nepal: A report of the Nepal national educational planning commission*. Kathmandu: Bureau of Publications, College of Education.
- Nottingham, E. K. (1971). *Religion a sociological view*. New York: Random House.
- NPC. (2002). *Tenth Plan (2002-2007)*. Kathmandu: Author.
- O'Brien, M., & Sue, P. (2007). Social exclusion in Europe: Some conceptual issues. *International journal of social welfare*, 16, 1-9.
- O'Reilly, D. (2005). Social Inclusion: A philosophical anthropology. *Politics*, 25 (2), 84-88.
- Ogbu, J. U. (1986). Stockton, California, revisited: joining the labor force. In Borman, K. M., & Reisman, J. (Eds.). *Becoming a worker* (Norwood, NJ, Ablex), 29-56
- Ortner, S. (1995). Resistance and the problem of ethnographic refusal. In Richard, G. F. (Ed.), *Recapturing anthropology in working in the present*. New York: School of American Research Press.
- Pandey, S. (2006). Para-teacher scheme and quality education for all in India: Policy perspectives and challenges for school effectiveness. *Journal of Education for teaching*, 32 (3).
- Pandey, T., Mishra, S., Chemjong, D., Pokhrel, S., & Rawal, N. (2006). *Forms and patterns of discrimination in Nepal*. Kathmandu: UNESCO.
- Parker, J. (2002). *Structuration*. New Delhi: Viva Books.
- Parkin, F. (1979). *Marxism and class theory: A Bourgeois critique*. Columbia University Press.

- 
- Parwez, Z. M., & Rana, S.P. (2006). *Linking the Madrasas with mainstream education in Nepal*. Kathmandu: CERID
- Parwez, Z. M., Rana, S.P., & Rajbhandari, A. (2008). *Formal education in Madrasas of Nepal: A study on emerging trends and issues*. Kathmandu: CERID.
- Parwez, Z. M., Rana, S.P., & Rajbhandari, A. (2007). *Institutional scope and need of mainstream education in Madrasas and their autonomy*. Kathmandu: CERID.
- Parwez, Z. M., Rana, S.P., Sherpa, P., & Pande, A.K. (2004). *Access of Muslim children to education: Phase II*. Kathmandu: CERID.
- Parwez, Z.M., Sherpa, P., Neupane, D., & Mishra, B.K. (2003). *Access of Muslim children to education*. Kathmandu: CERID.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Pfaff-Czarnecka, J. (1997). Vestiges and visions: Cultural change in the process of nation-building in Nepal. In Gellner. D. N., Pfaff-Czarnecka, J., & Whelptomn, J. (Eds.). *Nationalism and ethnicity in a Hindu Kingdom: The politics of culture in contemporary Nepal*. Amsterdam: Hardwood Academic Publishers.
- Power A., & Wilson, W. J. (2000). *Social exclusion and future of cities*. London: Center for analysis of social exclusion, London School of Economics.
- Pradhan, R. (2006). Understanding social exclusion and social inclusion in Nepalese context: Some preliminary remarks. *The organization*, 9 (3). I-XI.
- Pradhan, R. (2007). *Understanding social inclusion and exclusion in the Nepalese context: some preliminary remarks*. Unpublished manuscript. Press.
- Rai, U. (2009). *Making food reflecting lives: A case of food security and exclusion among Chepangs in Nepal*. Lalitpur: Social Sciences Baha and SIRF Secretariat, SNV Nepal. Unpublished Research Report.
- Rana, S. P., Quaiyum, A., Sherpa, P., & Parwez, M. Z. (2009). *Exclusion issues of Muslims of Nepal and role of education in their social inclusion*. Social Inclusion Research Fund, SNV Nepal. Unpublished research report.
- Sachar, R. J. (2006). *The Sachar report: High-level Committee on social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India*.
-

- Saijhee, A. (2003). *Child nutrition and poverty in south India: Noon meals in Tamil Nadu*. New Delhi: Dev Publishers & Distributors.
- Sargent, M. (1994). *The new sociology for Australians* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Melbourne: Longman Chesire.
- Schaefer, R.T., & Lamm, R. P. (1992). *Sociology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw Hill Inc.
- Schlesinger, A. M. (1992). *The disuniting of America: Reflections on a multicultural society*. New York: Whittle Direct Books.
- Sen, A. (1997). *Social exclusion: Concept, application and scrutiny*. Manila: Asian Development Bank.
- Sen, A. (2000). Social exclusion: Concept, application and scrutiny. *Social development paper, 1*. Asian Development Bank.
- Sharma, G.N. (1986). *History of education in Nepal: from Ancient to 1950* (in Nepali).
- Siddika, S. (1993). *Muslims of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Gazala Siddika.
- Sijapati, M. A. (2011). *Islamic revival in Nepal: Religion and a new nation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Silver, H. (1994). Social exclusion and social solidarity: Three paradigms. *International Labor Review*, 133 (5-6), 531–578.
- Silver, H. (1995). Reconceptualizing social disadvantage: Three paradigms of social exclusion. In Rodgers, G., Charles, G., & Joes, B. F (Eds.). *Social exclusion: Rhetoric, reality and responses*. Geneva: International Institute of Labor Studies.
- Simpson, G.E., & Yinger, J.M. (1965). Racial and cultural minorities: An analysis of prejudice and discrimination (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Harper and Row.
- Singh, M., & Mishra, N. (2010). *Evaluation study on mid day meal program in Meghalaya council for social development*. Hyderabad: Southern Regional Centre.
- Stephen, B., Diana, M., & Burton, N.P. (2001). *Introduction to education studies*. London: Sage, Paul Champan Publishing Ltd.
- Stewart, A. (2000). Social inclusion: An introduction. In Askonas, P., & Angus, S. (Eds.). *Social exclusion: Possibilities and tension*. New York: St Martin Press.

- 
- Stewart, F. et al. (2005/6). *Social exclusion and conflict: Analysis and policy implications*. UK: Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE)
- Taylor, P. (1999). Democratizing cities, habitat's global campaign on urban governance. *Habitat debate*, 5 (4), 1–5.
- Taylor, S. J., & Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. New York: John Wiley.
- Thapa, D. (2004). Radicalism and the emergence of Maoist. In Michael. H (Ed.). *Himalayan people's war: Nepal's Maoist rebellion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Thapa, N. (2009). *Country profile of excluded groups in Nepal*. Unpublished draft report, Kathmandu Nepal.
- Tomasevaski, K. (2004). *Manual on right based education: Global human right requirement made simple*. Bangkok: UNESCO.
- Townsend, P. (1979). *Poverty in the United Kingdom*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Townsend, T. (1994). *Effective schooling for community: Core-plus education*. London: Routledge.
- Tsing, A. (1993). *In the realm of the diamond queen*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University
- Turner, R. (1971). Sponsored and contest mobility and the school system. In Hopper, E. (Ed.). *Readings in the theory of educational systems*. London: Hutchinson and Co. Ltd.
- Uddin, M. E. (2009). Cross-cultural comparison of marriage relationship between Muslim and Santhal communities in rural Bangladesh. *World cultures ejournal*, 17 (1), 779.
- UN CRC. (1989). United Nations General Assembly Resolution 25 session 44. *Convention on the rights of the child*. Author.
- UNDP. (2004). *Nepal human development report*. Kathmandu: Nepal South Asia Centre.
- UNDP. (2004). *Nepal human development report: Empowerment and poverty reduction*. Kathmandu: Author.
- UNDP. (2009). *Nepal human development report*. Kathmandu: Nepal South Asia Centre.
-

- UNESCO. (2003). *Education in a multilingual world*. Retried from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001297/129728e.pdf>
- UNESCO. (2004). *Manual on rights-based education: Global human rights requirements made simple*. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok.
- UNESCO. (2007). *A human right based approach to education*. France: Author.
- UNESCO. (2007). *A human rights-based approach to education for all*. France: Author.
- United Nations. (2000). *United Nations Millennium Goals*. Retrieved from Un.org.2008-05-20.
- Wikipedia. *Social exclusion*. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_exclusion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_exclusion)
- Williams, R. (1985). *Keywords*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wilson, B., & Wyn, J. (1987). *Shaping futures: Youth action for livelihood*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- World Bank and DFID. (2006). *Unequal citizens, gender, caste and ethnic exclusion in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Author.
- World Bank/ DFID/ADB. (2006). *Resilience amidst conflict: An assessment of poverty in Nepal 1995-96 and 2003-04*. Author.
- Wright, D. (Ed.) (1879). *Vamsavali: History of Nepal*. (Trans., MunshiShewShanker Singh and PundiGunananda). Kathmandu: Nepal Antiquated Book Publishers.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Yinger, J.M. (1956). *Minority group in American society*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Young, I. M. (1999). Justice, Inclusion, and Deliberative Democracy. In Macedo. (Ed.), *Deliberative politics, essays on democracy and disagreement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Zeitlyn, S. (2004). *Social exclusion in Asia- some initial ideas*. London: DFID.



## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix I**  
**List of Indigenous Peoples of Nepal**

1. Kisan	31. Baramo
2. Kumal Gaule	32. Bahara
3. Kushbadiya	33. Bote
4. Kusunda	34. Bhujel
5. Gangai	35. Bhote
6. Gurung	36. Magar
7. Chepang	37. Majhi
8. Chantyal Thakali	38. Marphali
9. Chhairotan	39. Mugali
10. Jirel	40. Meche (Bodo)
11. Jhangad	41. Yakkha
12. Dolpo	42. Rai
13. Tangbe	43. Raute
14. Tajpuriya	44. Rajbanshi (Koch)
15. Tamang	45. Majhi
16. Tin Gaule Thakali	46. Larke
17. Topkegola	47. Limbu
18. Thakali	48. Lepcha
19. Thami	49. Lhopa
20. Tharu)	50. Lhomi (Singsawa
21. Thudam	51. Walung
22. Danuwar	52. Byanshi
23. Darai	53. Sherpa
24. Dura	54. Satr/Santhai
25. Dhanuk/Rajbanshi	55. Siyar
26. Dhimal	56. Sunuwar
27. Newar	57. Sural
28. Pahari	58. Hayu
29. Free	59. Hyolmo
30. Bankariya	

Source NFDIN Act, 2002

## Appendix II

### Population by Mother Tongue in Nepal

Mother Tongue	Total	Mother Tongue	Total
1 Nepali	11053255	48 Meche	3301
2 Maithili	2797582	49 Pahari	2995
3 Bhojpuri	1712536	50 Lepcha/Lapche	2826
4 Tharu (Dagaura/Rana)	1331546	51 Bote	2823
5 Tamang	1179145	52 Bahing	2765
6 Newar	825458	53 Koi/Koyu	2641
7 Magar	770116	54 Raji	2413
8 Aawadi	560744	55 Hayu	1743
9 Bantawa	371056	56 Byanshi	1734
10 Gurung	338925	57 Yamphu/Yamphe	1722
11 Limbu	333633	58 Ghale	1649
12 Bajika	237947	59 Khariya	1575
13 Urdu	174840	60 Chhiling	1314
14 Rajmanshi	129829	61 Lohorung	1207
15 Sherpa	129771	62 Panjabi	1165
16 Hindi	105765	63 Chinese	1101
17 Chamling	44093	64 English	1037
18 Santhali	40260	65 Mewahang	904
19 Chepang	36807	66 Samskrit	823
20 Danuwar	31849	67 Kaike	794
21 Jhangar/Dhangar	28615	68 Raute	518
22 Sunuwar	26611	69 Kisan	489
23 Bangla	23602	70 Churauti	408
24 Marwadi (Rajasthani)	22637	71 Baram/Marmu	342
25 Majhi	21841	72 Tilung	310
26 Thami	18991	73 Jero/Jerung	271
27 Kulung	18686	74 Dungmali	221
28 Dhimal	17308	75 Oriya	159
29 Angika	15892	76 Lingkhim	97
30 Yakkha	14648	77 Kusunda	87
31 Thulung	14034	78 Siddi	72
32 Sangpang	10810	79 Koche	54
33 Bhujel/Khawas	10733	80 Hariyanwi	33
34 Darai	10210	81 Magahi	30
35 Khaling	9288	82 Sam	23
36 Kumal	6533	83 Kurmali	13
37 Thakali	6441	84 Kagate	10
38 Chantyal	5912	85 Jhonkha	9
39 Nepali sain Bhasa	5743	86 Kuki	9
40 Tibetan	5277	87 Chhintang	8
41 Dumi	5271	88 Mizo	8
42 Jirel	4919	89 Nagamese	6
43 Bambule/umbule	4471	90 Lhomi	4
44 Puma	4310	91 Assamise	3
45 Hyolmo	3986	92 Sadhani	2
46 Nachhiring	3553	93 Unknown Language	168340
47 Dura	3397	48 Meche	3301

Source CBS, 2001



**Appendix III**  
**Distribution of Muslim Population in Nepal**

S.No.	District	Total population	Muslim Population	Percent
1	Rautahat	545132	106111	19.47
2	Banke	385840	73254	18.99
3	Kapilbastu	481976	87573	18.17
4	Parsa	497219	76567	15.40
5	Mahottari	553481	74783	13.51
6	Bara	559135	75051	13
7	Sunsari	625633	69187	11.06
8	Rupendehi	708419	61563	8.69
9	Dhanusha	671364	56124	8.36
10	Saptari	570282	47610	8.35
11	Sarlahi	635701	47364	7.45
12	Siraha	569880	40926	7.18
13	Morang	843220	37081	4.40
14	Nawalparasi	562870	21722	3.86
15	Jhapa	633042	19367	3.06
16	Bardia	382649	10671	2.79
17	Kathmandu	1081845	11982	1.11
18	Tanahu	315237	3227	1.02
19	Dang	462380	4610	1.00
20	Arghakhanchi	208391	1916	0.92
21	Gorkha	288134	2636	0.91
22	Chitwan	472048	3636	0.77
23	Kaski	380527	2620	0.69
24	Udayapur	287689	1735	0.60
25	Syangja	317320	1835	0.58
26	Kailali	616697	3413	0.55
27	Surkhet	269870	1157	0.43
28	Lamjung	177149	712	0.40
29	Salayn	60643	224	0.37
30	Palpa	268558	899	0.33
31	Makwanpur	392604	1264	0.32
32	Lalitpur	337785	1053	0.31
33	Pyuthan	212484	645	0.30
34	Parbat	157826	392	0.25
35	Dhading	338658	625	0.18
36	Baglung	268937	494	0.18
37	Dailekh	225201	393	0.17
38	Bhaktapur	225461	333	0.15
39	Myagdi	114447	163	0.14
40	Gulmi	296654	419	0.14

41	Nuwakot	288478	384	0.13
42	Bajura	100626	132	0.13
43	Kanchanpur	377899	386	0.10
44	Rukum	188438	141	0.07
45	Bajhang	167026	23	0.01
46	Kalikot	11510	8	0.07
47	Achham	231285	154	0.07
48	Doti	207066	124	0.06
49	Jajarkot	134868	80	0.06
50	Terhathum	113111	66	0.06
51	Rolpa	210004	121	0.06
52	Dhankuta	166479	91	0.05
53	Kavre	385672	208	0.05
54	Solukhumbu	107686	52	0.05
55	Sindhuli	277259	132	0.05
56	Mustang	14981	7	0.05
57	Ilam	282806	127	0.04
58	Jumla	69226	28	0.04
59	Khotang	231385	77	0.03
60	Panchthar	202056	64	0.03
61	Bhojpur	203018	55	0.03
62	Manang	9587	2	0.02
63	Ramechhep	212408	44	0.02
64	Taplejung	134698	26	0.02
65	Dadeldhura	126162	23	0.02
66	Dolpa	22071	4	0.02
67	Okaldhunga	156702	27	0.02
68	Sindhupalchok	293719	45	0.02
69	Sankhuwasabha	159203	23	0.01
70	Darchula	121996	12	0.01
71	Rasuwa	44731	3	0.01
72	Mugu	31465	2	0.01
73	Baitadi	234418	9	0.00
74	Dolakha	175912	5	0.00
75	Humla	40595	1	0.00
	Total	2273694	954023	4.22

Source CBS, 2001

## **Publications related to Research Work**

- Sherpa, P. (in press). Madrasa education in Nepal: A case study from Banke district. *Readings in Anthropology and Sociology of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Sociological Anthropological Society of Nepal.
- Sherpa, P. (2012). Social exclusion of Muslims in Nepal: A case study of Banke district. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 2 (9), 7-19.
- Sherpa, P. (2012). Socio-economic condition of Nepalese and Indian Muslims: A comparative study. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 2(10), 1-11.
- Sherpa, P. (2012). Role of Madrasa in education: A case study from Banke district of western Nepal. *Research Link - 95*, X (12), 19-22.
- Sherpa, P. (2010). Nijamati sewama aadibasi janajati sunyata ra samabesikaranko sawal (in Nepali) (Low representation of indigenous minorities in civil service and issue of inclusion). *Journal of Indigenous Nationalities*, 3, 127-153. Kathmandu: National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities.